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Irenic Theology

A Study of Some Antitheses in Religious Thought

By

Charles Marsh Mead, Ph.D., D.D.

Author of "Supernatural Revelation," etc.

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PREFACE

THE title of the following treatise indicates its purpose—the promotion of the spirit of harmony in religious discussions. Polemic theology has certainly not succeeded in promoting concord; it is worth while to see whether an opposite method will not have a better effect.

The reader may, it is true, detect here and there somewhat of a polemic tone in the treatise itself. This is almost unavoidable when the object is to show that extreme and one-sided views cannot represent the whole truth. But in showing this the intention nevertheless is to recognize, and to emphasize, the fact that even a one-sided view of truth still does represent one side of the truth. For, as a perusal of the book will make evident, its main purpose is to illustrate the fact that antithetic, and even apparently irreconcilable, religious conceptions are often to be regarded, not as mutually exclusive, but rather as needing to be combined, in order to express the fulness of the body of truth that is to be found in the oracles of God and in the Christian life.

I have, however, made no attempt to produce

a systematic theology. If by "system" is meant a closely-connected whole, to which each part is essential and in which each part finds its exactly appropriate place, it is more than doubtful whether a systematic theology is possible at all. Contributions to such a work can be made; but to produce a finished and rounded whole, presenting divine truth in its completeness, without disproportion and without a flaw, is a task to which the limited faculties of man are unequal.

Past failures of theologians to accomplish this task are certainly not due to any radical mistake in the selection of topics to be discussed. On the contrary, the leading topics must remain essentially what they always have been. God and man, as they are in themselves and in their mutual relations, the problem of sin, and the scheme of redemption through Christ,—these are the commanding themes; and no progress of thought, no scientific discoveries, will ever make them obsolete or subordinate. When efforts are made to replace them by other themes, it will generally appear either that what is heralded as a new truth is after all only a resuscitation of some old doctrine which may have been promulgated in a time unfavorable for its reception, or else that the alleged new light itself is a light that leads astray.

But it does not follow that nothing is to be gained by efforts to set forth the old truths in a somewhat new aspect, and to adjust them to

modern and improved forms of exegetical, philosophical, and scientific thought. Accretions of error, distorted and disproportionate conceptions, biasing influences of narrowmindedness, prejudice, or superstition,—these tend continually to disfigure and obscure the grand and massive fundamental facts. Like the moss that overgrows a fine old column, they need to be cleared away, that the truth in its simplicity, beauty, and power may be revealed.

For as Christians we must evermore cling to the assurance that we have a divine revelation which, while capable of perversion, is capable also of progressive comprehension. God has "shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The revelation is ours, though "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," and see the light always more or less refracted and dimmed by the imperfection of our vision. In the hope of helping somewhat to a clearer apprehension of this treasure and to the cultivation of a broader and more sympathetic judgment of the conflicting views which divide the Christian world, I give this volume to the public.

C. M. M.

October, 1905.

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CHAPTER I

ANTITHESES IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE

IT is a historic fact that respecting many of the most fundamental themes of religious thought there has been a tendency to oscillate between two opposite extremes. The resulting diversities in theological doctrines come from various attempts to avoid the extremes, or to combine in different proportions the antithetic views. But the multitude of these attempts, and the fact that the oscillation tends continually to repeat itself, lend countenance to the charge that the tendency is inherent in theological thought; and the inference is often drawn, that scientific truth in religious matters is unattainable. Certainty in the search after truth, it is concluded, can be reached only in the domain of physical science.

It is therefore pertinent, as a preliminary to the ensuing discussion, to show that theology is

not peculiar in being characterized by such oscillations. We find a similar tendency in all departments of scientific research, especially as regards the most fundamental questions. But the devotees of physical science do not allow themselves for this reason to despair of attaining truth, but are rather stimulated to search for a solution of the apparent contradictions. No more need theologians allow the existence of opposite and apparently irreconcilable theological theories to lead them to despair of reaching theologic truth. In both cases it will be found that, while sometimes plausible hypotheses may be effectually overthrown, more often there are elements of truth in each of the contending theories, and that the true solution is to be found, not by waging a war in which no quarter is given, but by exercising a spirit of mutual concession. It will thus frequently be seen that there is a middle ground on which all that is vital in each of the opposing theories may be conserved. Or if these opposing theories seem to be mutually contradictory, and incapable of reconciliation, and yet continually re-assert themselves, neither side being able to convince the other, then a presumption is created that, even though a full solution cannot now be attained, yet provisionally both of the contending doctrines should be accepted, and the full solution must be hoped for as attainable in the future. In other words, it will be found that the wisest and

most fruitful method of discussion will be that of inclusion, rather than exclusion.

Let us, then, first notice some illustrations, in physical science, of this tendency to oscillation between opposite extremes of opinion.

1. Take the fundamental conception of substance in relation to its attributes—matter and energy. The popular notion is that *things* have *qualities*. Men say, This object is round, red, heavy, etc. That thing is liquid, sour, etc. The notion is that of an underlying (*substans*) thing which is characterized by such and such properties. We do not think of redness as an objective fact apart from some *thing* that is red; nor do we have any conception of an objective thing except as marked by certain characteristics. The two conceptions go together, the one implying the other.

But even in regard to this most fundamental and general conception, scientific thought meets with serious difficulties, and has developed a great variety of mutually antagonistic views. What is matter? What is energy? Before these problems science still stands in an attitude of question rather than of affirmation. Between the notion of substance and that of quality, as denoting the real essence of things, there has been a continual vibration; and the end is not yet. In the earlier and less intelligent nations matter and energy have been looked upon as separate or

separable entities, matter being regarded as inherently inert and inactive, but caused to act by some spirit or deity that really exists apart from it. Later, we note a stage of thought according to which matter and force are less completely, but still really, distinguished. Here force is regarded as an imponderable ether, or fluid, and so as distinct from the ponderable things which are properly called matter, but yet as being connected with matter, and as being the source of the activity of material things. Kepler, Descartes, and Newton are among those who represent this phase of belief. More recently, however, we note a tendency in science to regard matter and force as always and inseparably united.[1] Yet side by side with this tendency we see another, which lays stress on the doctrine of the divine immanence, and holds that all activity of material things is to be regarded as evidence of a divine intelligence and will working in and through the various forms of matter. This doctrine, as often if not commonly stated, leaves the impression that matter is regarded as essentially inert, devoid of intrinsic activity, and that it is made to act only by this indwelling divine energy.[2] This virtually involves a recurrence to the primitive

[1] *Cf.* on this subject Henry Bence Jones's *Croonian Lectures on Matter and Force.* Lecture I. London, 1868.

[2] *Cf.* an article on *The Divine Immanency* in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. xlv., p. 331: "It affirms the omnipotence of God as the immediate source of all power and energy."

conception of matter as being inherently inactive —mere dead substance. Somewhat the same may be said of the philosophical doctrines of such men as Leibnitz and Lotze, who speak of the material world as consisting of monads which are endowed with a sort of intelligence, if not even personality, of their own, much after the analogy of the human body with its animating soul.[1] In all these speculations we see the influence of the popular conviction that matter, as substance, is a reality, while there is only an imperfect, if any, recognition of energy as being of the essence of matter.

Modern chemistry has tended to unite the two conceptions of substance and quality as involved in our cognition of the material world. The substances are reduced to a definite number of ultimate elements, each of which is regarded as made up of a number of material atoms. But these atoms have a marvelous tendency to come into combination with atoms of another kind, thus producing the complex objects with which men are familiar. This tendency is found to be uniform, and to work according to fixed laws. The atoms, therefore, are assumed to be characterized

[1] *Vid.* Leibniz, *The Monadology*, etc., by Robert Latta (Oxford, 1898), p. 106; Lotze, *Microcosmus*, vol. ii., p. 642 (English translation). Schopenhauer and von Hartmann go somewhat further, the latter affirming that "matter is in fact resolved into will and idea." *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, C., cap. v.

by forces of their own, causing certain operations by which alone the invisible atoms are recognized.

But this conclusion is contested; and we are now confronted with another drift—a vibration in a direction opposite to that just noted, a tendency to deny outright the reality of material atoms, and to affirm that force is the only reality. All that we perceive, it is said, is the so-called *qualities* of matter. Why, then, not conclude that the so-called qualities are the only real things? Why do we need to talk about an absolutely undiscoverable substance, as distinct from any and all of these discoverable properties? Why call them properties at all, implying that there is something that they belong to or are attached to, and not rather call them simply *forces*? And so we have the two opposing schools of the atomists and the dynamists. The dynamist plausibly argues that his is much the simpler hypothesis. Instead of an unknown something from which energies are supposed to emanate, he urges that we need to assume only the energies themselves to be real. Everything that is called a quality of matter can be resolved into a simple impression made on our senses. The quality is recognized only by what it *does*. Our senses are variously affected—that we are sure of; and we reasonably infer that various forces produce these various impressions.

And so the problem of substances and attributes is solved by abolishing the substances altogether, pronouncing them to be mere figments of the imagination. In place of atoms we have forces; and these forces are represented as not occupying space, but as being points or centers. Because they do not fill space, they are immaterial; and accordingly the dynamists often take great credit to themselves as not being materialists, even though they may deny the separate existence of mind, or spirit, just as emphatically as the crassest materialist ever denied it. But these points or centers of energy are supposed to *act* in space; and somehow one result of their activity is that they come into combination with one another in such a way as to produce the *appearance* of filling space. And here is presented one difficulty in the dynamistic hypothesis: If each center of force is a mathematical point—a point without dimensions—it is not easy to see how any collocation of them can produce an object that does have dimensions. No number of mathematical points can be added together so as to produce even a line, still less a plane, less still a solid. And it can never be made clear how these immaterial points of force can be so massed together as to constitute so very material a thing as the rock of Gibraltar. Atoms, though infinitesimally small, and imperceptible under the most powerful microscope, are yet assumed to have dimension, so that the

accumulation of a large enough number of them produces a body which can be seen. But one who affirms that an accumulation of absolutely dimensionless points can result in producing the solid globe on which we live, can do so only by adding to his dynamism an unequivocal illusionism. He must hold that what seems to be solid matter is such only in appearance—only an impression made on us by immaterial forces, but an impression which does not correspond with the fact.

The insufficiency of dynamism to solve the problem of matter appears in another way. Force, or energy, is synonymous with activity. Pure energy must be pure action. But activity, or action, is an abstract conception, having no meaning apart from an agent or actor. There must be some *thing* that acts, else there is no activity. The difficulty is not removed by saying that these hypothetical *points* of force act. This amounts only to giving another name to the things. At the most it amounts only to saying that the things are dimensionless, or immaterial, instead of being material and space-filling. But there is still retained the dual notion of *thing* and *quality*, which the theory of dynamism has been trying to avoid. For inasmuch as the impressions and sensations which are made upon us by these supposed "points" are very numerous and very various, it is necessary to account for this

difference by a difference in the nature of the "points"—by assuming, for example, that one point, or group of points, has the property of producing the sensation of light, another the sensation of smell, another the sensation of weight, etc. Since it is only through our experience of sensation and perception that we get the conception of force at all, it is obviously necessary to posit a great variety of forces; and therefore these alleged "points," though immaterial, must be of very different *kinds;* that is, they must have different characteristics, different properties. And so we are brought back irresistibly to the notion of *things* and their *qualities*. The duality which the dynamist set out to get rid of, proves to be retained. All that has been accomplished has been the substitution of new terms, and the denial that the ultimate elements are extended—which denial, as we have seen, creates more difficulty than it removes.

The failure of dynamism to solve the problem of matter and energy is not made essentially less obvious, if we resolve all energy into motion, or resolve all the various chemical elements into one. Although the sixty or seventy ultimate substances which have hitherto resisted all attempts to analyze them should ultimately be proved to be in fact only various aspects of one single substance, the problem would remain essentially the same as before; there would still be the

question whether this one substance in its ultimate form is to be conceived as a material atom or as an immaterial point. And so, if it should finally appear that all energy is to be regarded as various forms of motion, there would remain the same difficulties as before. There is much more likelihood that this view of energy will have to be adopted than that all the chemical substances will be found to be only one.[1] More and more is motion found to characterize not only material bodies as masses, but the minute, invisible particles of which the larger bodies are made up. The most inert-looking thing conceivable, as, for instance, a stone lying on the ground, is said to consist of particles that are in an unceasing flux, the increase of which causes the sensation of an increase of heat. And in general all that is positively known of force—whether chemical, me-

[1] It has, however, recently been claimed by Prof. J. J. Thompson, Sir Wm. Ramsay, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others, that this has already been made probable—that the so-called distinct substances in reality consist of atoms each of which is a collection of much more infinitesimal "ions" or "electrons," the difference between the several chemical substances consisting in the different number of these ultimate infinitesimals found in the atoms of each. Thus 700 electrons are supposed to constitute one atom of hydrogen, 11,200 of them an atom of oxygen, etc. This theory can hardly be said to have as yet gotten beyond the hypothetical stage; but even if it should be adopted, it would only carry the mystery of the constitution of matter a step further back, and would in no way solve the problem of substance and quality.

chanical, or electrical—is that it results from, or is connected with, certain kinds of motion.[1]

But even if all activity should be finally resolved into motion, our problem would still not be solved. It is certain that motion cannot be conceived except as some *thing* is supposed to move; abstract motion is a nonentity. The dynamist may, it is true, still say that the thing which moves is the "point." But even if we grant that immaterial points can be conceived as moving about in space, we must, in order to account for the innumerable *results* of the motions, still assume an innumerable variety of *kinds* of motion in the "points." And we can account for such a variety of motions only by positing a *tendency* in the points to move as they do rather than otherwise. But this would be positing *qualities* in the points. And so we come back after all to the old dualism of matter and force—substance and quality,—even though the substance be called immaterial.

[1] "In the outward world every activity is connected with motion. The mechanical impulses, chemical operations, organic functions, cannot be conceived without motion, and motion in space. Everything that has come to be, every existent form, whether that of the crystal, or of the spheroidal earth, has been produced by the efficient motion which controls matter." Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 2d ed., p. 141. So G. J. Romanes (*Mind and Motion and Monism*, p. 3), "All the forms of energy have now been proved to be but modes of motion; and even matter, if not in its ultimate constitution vortical motion, at all events is known to us only as changes of motion."

Of the metaphysical difficulties involved in the theory of matter a good illustration is found in the attempts to solve the problem of *change*. No conception is more familiar. Poetry and science equally recognize the universality of change as the most obvious and striking feature of things. But when men come to analyze the conception, they find it so elusive that the most contradictory conclusions are arrived at. We are familiar with the ancient conflict on this point between the Eleatic and the Heraclitic schools. On the one hand, change and motion were declared to be inconceivable and impossible; on the other, it was held that change is the law of all existences. The Eleatics did not deny the *appearance* of change, but argued that it must be merely an appearance, since the attempt to *think* it leads to contradiction. The notion of change implies the union of identity and difference; but two things cannot be at once identical with, and different from, one another. This difficulty is so great that one of the most acute of modern critics of the Eleatic doctrine [1] finds himself forced to say that, when a thing changes, it becomes a totally different thing, that there is no identity between them except in the sense that the process can be reversed: A becomes A′; and then A′ can be changed back into A; whereas A cannot be changed into B. Water may become ice; and

[1] B. P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, ch. iii.

the ice is absolutely different from the water; the only ground for affirming their identity in any sense is the fact that the ice can be turned back into the water. But the author elsewhere speaks of an acorn becoming an oak; he fails, however, to tell us how the oak can be turned back into the acorn; and so, according to his own doctrine, there is no identity of any sort between them. The only permanent being, according to him, is the percipient mind; all else is a perpetual flux—not being, but "becoming." Even where there is an appearance of changelessness,

> even this [he says] is not to be viewed as an exception to the universal flow of being, but is to be regarded as a continuous reproduction of A, so that the series is as real as in the other cases. . . . It is like the flame of a lamp when undisturbed. It seems to be a resting thing; but it is only the phenomenon of a continuous process of combustion. We call it a thing, while it is really a process.

If we were obliged to choose between the two antitheses as thus set forth, we might well be tempted to embrace the Eleatic doctrine, flatly as it contradicts all appearance and observation. Zeno's arguments to prove the impossibility of motion are not so trivial as they are sometimes represented to be. Motion can be conceived only as taking place in time, and at the present time. Nothing moves, nothing takes place, in the past

or in the future. If an object moves, it is moving *now*. But the present time has absolutely no duration; it is like a mathematical point; it is no time. All time is therefore either future or past. But since motion, if it takes place, must take place in the present time, it follows that it cannot take place at all. Our modern Heraclitic philosopher finds this and other difficulties so great that he declares both time and motion to be nothing but forms of thought—not objective realities at all. The marvel is that, having given up the objective reality of motion, he should so valiantly champion the objective reality of change, inasmuch as all the changes that we know of consist in certain kinds of motion.

Now though there may be metaphysical riddles hard to solve in some of our most fundamental conceptions, it is obvious that the conflict between the Eleatic and the Heraclitic doctrine all arises from their differing view of substance and quality. To the Eleatic, a unitary, permanent, and unchanging substance is the one reality. To the Heraclitic, activity is the one reality. The one tries to get along with the thing without action; the other tries to get along with action without the thing. The chief difficulty vanishes as soon as we combine both sides of the alternative, and hold that *things act*. A certain number of atoms of chlorine come into connection with a certain number of atoms of sodium; a trans-

formation results, and common salt is produced. A peculiar kind of motion of the ultimate substances has caused a change. We can assume that the ultimate substances are essentially unchanged, but that the change has been only in their properties—their ways of acting, their motions. We can thus retain in the notion of change the two features of identity and difference. Enough of mystery and uncertainty is indeed left. What the atoms are—whether they are indivisible or impenetrable; what their shape is, and whether their shape is ever changed; how one kind of atom can be two hundred times as heavy as another; why two different kinds of atoms, combining in one proportion, produce a substance entirely different from that which comes from the same two kinds combining in another proportion; what the *modus* of any chemical combination is; whether (as is beginning to be thought) the ultimate atoms are compressible,[1] and, if they are, how this compressibility can be conceived, unless the atom is after all not the ultimate substance, but is composed of a multitude of still more minute particles, which stand at a distance from each other and therefore can be squeezed together, just as the particles of a gas can be compressed till the gas becomes a liquid—these and other problems may possibly

[1] See T. W. Richards in *Proceedings* of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vols. 37–39.

remain forever unsolved. But it does not follow that the atomic theory is false; for it, better than any other, accords with the observed facts of physics, and satisfies the demands of metaphysics.

Another puzzling problem connected with the science of matter and energy is raised by the question, whether there can be such a thing as action at a distance. The phenomena of magnetism and of gravitation seem to show that such a thing is real, and therefore possible. The magnet certainly does draw to itself iron substances that are separated from it by a considerable interval. The sun certainly does attract the planets, though millions of miles away from them. Yet even Newton, the great discoverer of the law of gravitation, could not believe in the possibility of action at a distance, but said:

> That gravity should be innate, inherent, and essential to matter, so that one body may act upon another at a distance through a vacuum, without the mediation of anything else, by and through which their action and force may be conveyed from one to another, is to me so great an absurdity that I believe no man who has in philosophical matters a competent faculty of thinking can ever fall into it.[1]

This is high authority; and Newton is only one of many who have laid it down as a kind of physical

[1] *Four Letters from Sir Isaac Newton to Dr. Bentley*, p. 25.

axiom, that no body can act on another at a distance from it. It has been assumed that, whenever there appears to be such action, there must be some intervening medium through which the activity is communicated—in short, that there is never any action of one substance upon another except through actual contact. In the case of gravitation it seems difficult to see how this principle can be maintained; for the whole modern theory of the planetary movements originally presupposed that there is no resisting medium between the heavenly bodies. Nevertheless in recent times there has been developed the hypothesis of an ether which fills all space; and this ether has been made to do service in the work of gravitation. It is rather inconceivable how such an impalpable, imponderable, and tenuous a thing as the ether is supposed to be, can be used by the sun in pulling the planets towards itself; and so some speculators invert the whole procedure, and hold that the ether does not pull, but *pushes*, the heavenly bodies around. This is scarcely more comprehensible than the theory of the attraction of gravitation. But that the hypothesis of an all-pervading ether should be propounded at all, shows how strong a hold this axiom of the impossibility of action at a distance has obtained upon the minds of scientific men. The hypothesis seemed otherwise both groundless and superfluous. Nothing but the supposed

necessity of something to mediate the action of distant bodies on one another could ever have led to so daring a supposition as this one, which has now become almost a commonplace among the assumptions of scientists.

It was, however, not so much the exigencies of the theory of gravitation, as those of the theory of light, which led to the development of this ether hypothesis. But the same supposed want was operative in this case also—the want of a medium through which the light of the sun and stars could be communicated through the enormous interstellar spaces. It belongs to the expert physicist to expound in detail the manner in which the ether mediates the transmission of light. There are confessedly grave difficulties in conceiving what kind of a substance the ether is. Apparently, if it is at all analogous to the substances with which we are more familiar, it must be of almost inconceivable tenuity; that is, the particles of which it is composed must be, relatively to their weight, at a considerable distance from one another. And even then it is not obvious why such an all-pervading substance should not more or less impede the motion of the heavenly bodies. And so some [1] tell us that it is not proper to speak of the ether as being matter at all. But inasmuch as it is supposed to occupy space—not only the interstellar spaces previously

[1] As, *e. g.*, A. E. Dolbear, *Matter, Ether, and Motion*, p. 35.

thought to be empty, but also the pores of even the most solid bodies known to us—it must have this primary quality of matter. It is supposed to be characterized by undulations, somewhat after the analogy of the vibrations of the air which produce the phenomena of sound. Some [1] even suppose it to be the ultimate cause of all the motion and activity of things in the universe. Some think it to be compressible; others not. Some conceive of it as a sort of jelly-like substance which absolutely fills all space, though in this case it is hard for the ordinary mind to see how there could be any motion either in the ether or in anything else. In fact, the conception swarms with difficulties, and even with contradictions. Yet, with all its difficulties, it is adopted in order to avoid the greater difficulty of conceiving action at a distance.

Yet, strange to say, modern physics generally lays down propositions which require us to believe action at a distance to be a fact. Sometimes indeed physicists speak of the molecules as coming into collision with one another in that constant play and flux which is supposed to characterize the particles of even the hardest bodies. But more often we are taught that there is no such thing as actual contact, but that, as these molecules approach one another, a repulsive force is manifested which keeps them apart,

[1] *E. g.*, Philipp Spiller, *Der Weltäther als kosmische Kraft.*

though the distance between them may be infinitesimally small. If this is so, then there is action at a distance after all. The smallness of the distance makes no difference with the general question of the conceivability of such action. If two particles can attract or repel one another when only a millionth of an inch apart, it is conceivable that they might do so when a million of miles apart.

So then we find ourselves confronted by a sharp antithesis.[1] One class of thinkers deems it impossible even to conceive of action at a distance; another not only fails to find this unthinkable, but even holds that there is no action except at a distance. The difference seems to be connected with a difference in the conception of matter and energy, though this difference may not be recognized by the opposite parties themselves. He who thinks action at a distance impossible really emphasizes the *inertia* of matter. It is to him a dead mass which can be set into motion or activity only by a direct impact of some other mass. Why *any* substance moves or acts, is an ulterior question; but action seems to him to demand a real contact. He, on the other hand, who questions what seemed so axiomatic to Newton, lays more stress on the *forces* of matter. Inasmuch as the ultimate nature of these forces is at best mys-

[1] On this subject *cf.* further G. T. Ladd, *A Theory of Reality*, pp. 274 *ff.*, and B. P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, pp. 298 *ff.*

terious, he cannot see any sufficient reason for supposing that they are necessarily confined in their operation to the particular masses in which they seem to reside.

And so the vibration goes on between the two conceptions of substance and quality, matter and force; and there appears to be no solution which does not frankly accept both sides of the antithesis. Even then there are puzzles and mysteries left unsolved. The fundamental question, What is matter? is still unanswered. The farther scientific research goes in analyzing the elements of which the earth is made up, the more numerous are the problems asking for solution. Chemistry and physics have made great strides in determining facts concerning the *relations* of things; but with the more radical and fundamental questions, which relate to the *essence* of things and the causes of their action, they are struggling still.

2. In view of the confusion and uncertainty which thus is seen to beset the physical sciences, another class of thinkers undertake a still more radical method of solution: they pronounce matter and material forces alike to be unreal. They lay stress on the hardly disputable truth, that the only thing one can be absolutely sure of is the experience of his own mind. That experience, however, in many cases, is certainly a deceptive one; and what is the proof that all our apparent perceptions of a material world are not illusions?

By assuming that they are, we rid ourselves at one stroke of the whole brood of enigmas and contradictions which have been encountered in the effort to believe in the objective reality of a material world. This is the doctrine of idealism in its extreme form. A modified type of it—sometimes called phenomenalism—refrains from absolutely denying the existence of an external world, but insists that our sense-perceptions do not at all correspond with the outward reality, whatever that may be, and that the best we can do is to observe and classify the operations of our minds, concerning which we can have a certain knowledge.[1]

[1] One of the most prominent of modern idealists is F. H. Bradley, who, in his *Appearance and Reality*, concludes from the contradictions which result from trying to conceive the objects of perception to be real, that these are nothing but appearances. Yet inasmuch as appearances are facts, they must in some way "contribute to make reality what it is" (p. 132). The problem, then, is to find out in what way "appearances can belong to reality" (*ibid.*). This problem is solved by assuming that reality must be a unit, since there can be "no independent reals" (p. 144). "Hence the Absolute is, so far, an individual and a system." But this is "formal and abstract." "When we ask as to the matter which fills up the empty outline, we can reply in one word, that this matter is experience" (*ibid.*). This conclusion is derived from the fact that we have no conception of anything as having being, except as it consists in sentient experience. "Anything, in no sense felt or perceived, becomes to me quite unmeaning." Consequently "I am driven to the conclusion, that for me experience is the same as reality" (p. 145). But the experience of each individual is that of

The idealist, however, cannot expect to have the field all to himself. Over against him, in absolute opposition, stands the materialist, who

the soul mediated by the body. Both soul and body, however, are found to be self-contradictory "appearances" (p. 298). So then reality is the *experience* enjoyed by an *appearance!* The appearance is not reality; but its experience is reality! It is obvious to ask what it is that is experienced. The answer, according to Mr. Bradley's doctrine, must be that the objects of the experience are the various things that the world seems to be made up of. But all these things have been shown by Mr. Bradley, as he thinks, to be self-contradictory appearances. Therefore reality consists in the *experience* which self-contradictory appearances have of self-contradictory appearances! But in reality itself, we are told, there must be no inconsistency and no contradiction. Hence our philosopher invents an "Absolute," in which all experiences of appearances become condensed, as it were, into one Reality. "In the Absolute no appearance can be lost. Each one contributes and is essential to the unity of the whole. . . . How these various modes come together into a single unity, must remain unintelligible" (pp. 456, 457). No doubt it must. All our experiences having been elaborately shown to be unrealities, it is certainly unintelligible how even this abstract Absolute can transform them into realities, like a voracious monster transmuting in his stomach all sorts of vegetables into one kind of flesh. It would be pleasant to be informed how Mr. Bradley ever learned so much about the Absolute's achievements. Moreover, one is tempted to ask, What is meant by this "Absolute"? The word is an adjective, and necessarily implies that it is a predicate of some thing or person. But all predicates, or qualities, have been shown by Mr. Bradley to be mere appearances. And so his Absolute, which is the sum of reality, is after all only an appearance; and therefore his solution of the problem is the problem renewed. One is tempted to regard Mr. Bradley's book as a huge joke rather than a serious philosophical discussion.

finds that the phenomena of perception are all to be reduced to certain operations of the body—a material substance. Every so-called cognition consists in certain affections of the nerves and the brain. Nothing but material substances can be discovered either in the body or out of it. Even what we call pure thinking, as distinguished from perceiving, always consists, it is affirmed, in certain motions of the particles of the brain. Mind, therefore, is nothing but one of the qualities or operations of matter. Nothing else can be discovered by any scientific test. Neither by weight, nor by chemical analysis, can anything be detected which does not come under the category of matter. Hence it is argued that it is most reasonable to discard the hypothesis of two diverse and antithetic elements in the universe—mind and matter—and to posit only one—matter, manifesting a great variety of activities, among them thought and feeling.

The antithesis of materialism and idealism differs from that which has been previously considered. We have here matter *versus* mind, whereas there we had matter *versus* energy. But the antithesis has the same origin as the other, viz., the attempt to solve the problems which are presented in the every-day experiences of sense-perception. The history of the conflict between these opposite conceptions is a long one. It goes back to Democritus, and comes up to the present

time. It is not necessary to examine it in detail. If we were obliged to accept either horn of the dilemma, it would be difficult to make a choice. The arguments are about equally cogent, and equally fallacious. The weakness of the materialistic position is this: that the very reasoning which aims to disprove the independent existence of mind is a purely *mental* production, and is addressed only to men's *minds*. If the argument is cogent, it is so because the laws of logic, the deductions of the mind, have an authority and force of their own, quite distinct from any discoverable laws of matter. Therefore, we may say, the more convincing the argument is, the more it refutes itself.—The weakness of the idealistic argument is that it necessarily leads to solipsism, and so is reduced to absurdity. If the objective reality of the material world is doubted because our cognition cannot be proved not to be purely subjective and illusive, then the same illusion besets every man's apparent cognition of every other man. He who denies the objective reality of the material world must, if consistent, deny the reality even of his own body—still more that of other bodies than his own. But as it is only through the observed phenomena of other human bodies that one can get an idea of the existence of other minds, it follows that the consistent idealist cannot admit that anything really exists but his own mind. Each man is to

himself the whole universe. I must deny your existence; you must deny mine; and we agree only in denying the existence of everybody else.

It is obvious that neither of these extreme doctrines can ever win general acceptance. This is not a case in which we are obliged to adopt one part of the alternative, to the exclusion of the other. It is quite possible, if not indeed necessary, to believe in the reality of both mind and matter. And according as stress is laid on one or the other as being the dominant principle, we have various systems of so-called idealism and materialism. There has been through the centuries a continual oscillation between the two extremes. During the second and third quarter of the last century the tendency of scientific thought drifted strongly in the materialistic direction. Since then the tendency is in the other direction; and the word "materialism" has become so ill-savored that even those who might fairly be termed materialists indignantly protest against being so called. As long ago as 1874, when Tyndall made his famous declaration, "I . . . discern in that matter which we in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of every form and quality of life," he took pains to deprecate being therefore called a materialist. The same protest is made by Herbert Spencer and

his followers. But whatever names may be given or declined, the vibration will go on, so long as the attempt is made to avoid the dualism of mind and matter. A monism which simply insists on God as being the eternal source and sustainer of all things, may be accepted; but the monist who undertakes to do away with that twofoldness of the created world which is found in spirit and matter, has failed to learn the lesson which the history of speculation might have taught him. Mind and matter—mind indeed superior to matter, but yet for its development largely dependent on matter—mind and matter are, and always must be, held by the great mass of men to be the twofold constituents of the universe. Difficulty may be encountered in defining the relation of the one to the other; but greater difficulty confronts any one who attempts to eliminate either, or to identify the two.

3. A specific phase of the antithesis between mind and matter is found in the relation of mind to body. This is a most intimate relation; and, the reality of both mind and body seems to be one of the most certain dicta of consciousness. Yet, just because of this intimate connection, there is a temptation, especially on the materialistic side, to deny the duality. The body comes first into existence, and the mind seems to be a later phase of its development. The exercises of the mind appear to be wholly dependent on the

bodily organs, especially the brain. Many of them are carried on by these organs apart from consciousness. There are sometimes cases of double consciousness, or double personality, mediated by one body. A sudden change or injury of the brain may obliterate all memory of the past, while it yet leaves the man otherwise conscious and sane. In short, the mind seems often to be the plaything of the body. And when the physical forces decay, the mind generally decays with them—often indeed sooner. Laying stress on such considerations, the materialist can make out a strong argument for his doctrine. But in spite of all such persuasions the ordinary man will always reply: "Say what you please; but my body is not my soul. My body is my organism, my organ, my instrument; but it is not *I*. It can and does affect me, my mind, my moods; but so I can affect *it;* and whenever there is need, I can resist and defy it." And more than that, so sure is the ordinary man of the distinction between body and soul that he believes that the soul will survive the dissolution of the body.

Not only in the sphere of theory, but perhaps still more in practical life, do we observe these contrasts in the estimate of soul and body. On the one hand, we see the sensualist, to whom physical enjoyment is the highest good; and, on a higher plane, the zealot of physical culture, whose highest ambition is to be a great athlete. On the

other hand, we see the spiritual enthusiast, who tries, as far as possible, in his cultivation of the soul, to ignore and subdue the body; and, in modern times, the self-styled Christian scientist, who, in his effort to get rid of bodily ailments, tries to imagine the ailments, if not the body itself, to be nothing but a product of the imagination. There will always be vagaries and fanaticism of various kinds, so long as there is one-sidedness in either direction respecting the relative importance of soul and body. The tendency of a sound common sense will be to recognize the genuine reality of both, their close union, their constant influence on each other, and the consequent necessity of cultivating both for the sake of realizing the highest good of each. Yet the question, how soul and body can be united so as to form one single person will remain, perhaps forever, an inscrutable mystery. There are no difficulties in theology more staggering than those that beset this question.

Yet, in spite of all difficulties and mysteries, the common sense of men will doubtless go on, affirming that substance and quality must belong together; that mind and matter are distinct realities; and that body and spirit are united in the constitution of human beings. If, on the one hand, there is a materialistic drift towards the denial of the immaterial and the spiritual; or if, on the other, there is an idealistic drift towards

the denial of the material and the physical, there will always be a reaction in the other direction. And the solution will come, so far as it can be reached at all, only when men are ready to accept the truth of both sides of the antithesis.

CHAPTER II

ANTITHESES IN THEISTIC CONCEPTIONS

LET us pass now to questions of a more theological type. The transition is not a very abrupt one. The line between natural and religious science is not so sharp as is often thought. The fundamental theme of theology is God; but the question of divine agency in the affairs of the material universe is one that can never be wholly excluded from the natural sciences.

1. The various conceptions of deity which have been cherished may all be said to lie in or between the two extremes of an Infinite Impersonal Power and a Finite Person. Polytheism of course involves finiteness as a characteristic of deity; only one God can be infinite. The mythology of Greece and Rome presents to us a picture of various gods, superior indeed to men, but often contending with one another, and possessing passions and infirmities which belong to human beings. They were decidedly personal, but decidedly limited. In lower forms of polytheism, as fetishism, there is still present the notion of a personal being residing in the object which is

called the fetish. Deities in these low forms of theism are conceived as beings to be feared or propitiated. Some degree of intelligence and will is always attributed to them. So in every form of animism; the main feature is the conception of some kind of spirit, malignant or benignant, which has more or less influence over human life. Even monotheism by no means necessarily implies a strictly infinite deity; still less does henotheism imply it. But all these forms of theism agree in ascribing personality to the divine beings.

Pantheism is the extreme opposite of polytheism. Various forms of belief have received this name; some forms of so-called pantheism do not exclude belief in a divine personality. But in its simplest and most consistent form, in which the universe as a whole is deified, personality, in the proper sense of that term, is not ascribed to the deity. Sometimes a sort of unconscious will and intelligence seems to be accorded to this great Whole; but the personality which seems to be recognized is in reality nothing but a poetic personification. Whenever the doctrine comes to be scientifically and dogmatically stated, it is found that what is commonly understood by personality is not conceived as characterizing the deity of pantheism. The fundamental notion is that of an all-comprehensive Power, or, more vaguely, universal Nature. The term "God" is used, for instance, by Spinoza; but no attribute of per-

sonality is attributed to him. And in the more modern pantheistic systems, such as that of Herbert Spencer, personality is expressly denied to the Supreme Being, and declared to be even inconceivable and impossible. Personality, we are told, implies limitation. Consciousness, as we know of it, consists of successive states and of constant modifications. But this is inconsistent with the immutability and the omniscience which must be ascribed to a divine being. So personality, as we know it, involves emotion. But this, we are reminded, can exist only in a consciousness that is limited; it implies seeing, or becoming acquainted with, something new, previously unknown; and this again conflicts with immutability and omniscience.[1]

This, then, presents us the extreme opposite of polytheism. Here we have unity; there, plurality. Here we have power unlimited and unconscious; there we have power limited and conscious. This pantheistic conception, though found far back in the speculations of Indian philosophers, has always been the result of a reaction from the crudities or absurdities of an impure theism; it is not, and cannot well be, the religion of the masses. In some form it has often tinged the thinking of even Christian theologians, when they have attempted to attain a conception of God

[1] See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. iii., p. 167.

that presents him as free from all limitations. The word "anthropomorphism" has for some minds such a terror that they think it their duty to conceive of God as being in all respects unlike man; and the natural effect is to make them eliminate one trait of personality after another till none is left. The attempt to purify the conception of God from erroneous notions is carried on so far that the conception is purified to death. For if there is any one feature in the conception of deity which is central and fundamental, it is that of personality. If this should ever be expelled from the theism of mankind, all religion would receive its death-blow.

The antithesis before us is a plain one, and a sharp one. How is it to be dealt with? Obviously, by seeking to recognize and adopt the truth that is found on either side, rejecting the crudities, excrescences, and errors. True, this is not an easy task. Not all men can be brought to agree on any middle ground. But an approximation can be made. In the first place, most thinking men are ready to abandon polytheism. In all polytheistic nations the more intelligent have worked themselves into some form of monotheism. The better understanding there is of the interrelations of both men and things in the world, the more clear does it become that the control of the world cannot be divided among a multitude of limited and conflicting deities. The road to

monotheism is theoretically short and easy, however hard it may be to bring the world to a practical adoption of it.

The next step is to attain a right conception of the character of the one God. And here there has to be an elimination of unworthy notions. While a polytheist can believe in gods that differ materially in their moral character, a monotheist has not that freedom. His God cannot be both good and bad. And the tendency must be to ascribe to God moral perfection. Here again it may not be easy to agree on the point, what moral perfection in the Deity involves. But it is a great gain to agree that God must be morally spotless. So, in regard to the other attributes of God, the normal tendency is to divest them of imperfection and limitation—to regard his power as omnipotence, and his knowledge as omniscience. There is no difficulty in all this; on the contrary, it would be difficult to rest in any other way of conceiving the one Supreme Being.

It is only when we come to the conception of the Absolute, that the trouble begins. It is a familiar mode of speaking to call God the Absolute One. But it is important to make sure what is meant by it. Dean Mansel, in his *Limits of Religious Thought*, tells us that the three most essential factors in our notion of the Deity are that he is Infinite, Absolute, and the First Cause.[1] It is to

[1] P. 31.

be noted, in the first place, that he entirely omits personality as necessary to our conception. But, in the next place, it is to be noted that, in his apparent eagerness to multiply difficulties in theistic thought, he gives a misleading definition of "Absolute." He tells us that "the Absolute, as such, is independent of all relation." [1] Elsewhere indeed he defines it as "that which exists in and by itself, having no necessary relation to any other being." [2] Prof. Fiske is more sweeping, and says that "the definition of the Absolute is that which exists out of all relations." [3] Herein he follows Mr. Spencer, who calls the Absolute the "Irrelative" or the "Non-relative." [4] And then these writers proceed to tangle and confuse their own and their readers' minds by setting forth the contradictions and inconceivabilities into which we are brought by trying to carry out this conception of God as the Unrelated One.

It is a sufficient reply to the formidable dialectics that has been founded on this definition of the Absolute, that it is a definition which does not answer to the facts of linguistic usage. In calling God the Absolute One, men have *not* meant that he exists out of all relations. And in

[1] P. 53. Ritschl in his polemic against Frank adopts a similar definition of the word (*Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 18).

[2] P. 31.

[3] *Cosmic Philosophy*, vol. i., p. 9.

[4] *First Principles*, pp. 75, 77, 6th ed.

the other connections in which the word is used, it has no such meaning. Absolute velocity means the velocity of an object when not *considered* in relation to the velocity of another object. But it does not mean that there *is* no such relation. In calling God absolute, men have simply meant that he is not limited or controlled by any power or person outside of himself. The closest analogy to the usage is seen in our speaking of absolute monarchs. But who was ever so foolish as to think that, because a king is absolute, he therefore sustains no relation to anybody or anything? It is difficult to have patience with the sophistry which has flowed from a definition which has been invented by a few modern philosophers—a definition which contradicts all *usus loquendi*, and one which the philosophers themselves are unable to follow consistently; for it is noticeable, for instance, that Mr. Spencer repeatedly speaks of the *relation* between the Absolute and the Relative.

The terms "absolute" and "infinite," as applied to God, are very nearly synonymous. Both mean "unlimited"; but "infinite" is more used with reference to the greatness, "absolute" more with reference to the independence, of God. But in whatever sense the words are used, the divine *personality* must in any case be maintained. That is fundamental and indispensable. A God who does not know anything is certainly no God. If one really cannot see how God's absoluteness is

consistent with his personality, then the logical course is to give up the absoluteness. Better still, let him use the term "absolute" in a sense which is consistent with personality.

But even when this is done, it must be admitted that there is a difficulty in conceiving of God as personal in the sense ordinarily attached to that word. To us personality involves a constant succession and change of thoughts, feelings, and volitions. Mutation and development seem to be inseparable from the conception. But in a Divine Being who is eternally conscious of all things, and eternally perfect in power and knowledge, it is difficult to see how there can be such a change and growth and variety as we associate with a real person. The difficulty may be sometimes exaggerated; but it is real. It is best met by showing that the denial of the divine personality fails to relieve us of the difficulties of the problem. The case is somewhat analogous to the problem of the ultimate atoms in relation to the visible world. How can these absolutely changeless atoms be the source of the infinite and unceasing changes which are going on around us? The difficulty drives some to the hypothesis that there are no such changeless substances—that the only reality is change itself; it drives others to affirm that the changes are only apparent, not real. The true solution must admit the difficulty, while rejecting both these hypotheses.

But it is not merely philosophers who have put difficulties in the way of conceiving God as a real person. Theologians also have often aggravated them unwarrantably. The doctrine of God's immutability in particular has been very generally so held as to mar, and almost paralyze, any adequate recognition of his personality. The doctrine has been insisted on in its extreme form, that of denying change of any sort either in the essence or in the activities of the Divine Being. That is, God's actions, thoughts, and volitions are conceived as concentrated into one eternal, unbroken, monotonous sameness. And as for sensibilities and emotions, these have been denied to him altogether. "Without body, parts, or passions," say the old creeds; from which it logically follows that God can neither love nor hate, be neither pleased nor displeased. It is amazing to see how scrupulously many expounders of Christian doctrine have championed a conception which virtually denies to God any moral character at all.[1] They have been so afraid of attributing to him any of the imperfections of men that they have hardly dared to conceive him as like man in any respect. To make the unlikeness as radical as possible, they have insisted that he does not exist in time, that consequently there can be not only no change, but no succession, in

[1] On God's passibility see Dr. Bushnell's *Sermons for the New Life*, Sermon XVIII.

the divine existence or activities. God's eternity is pictured as being a sort of point of time into which all divine functions are concentrated and condensed.

By these twin conceptions of timelessness and absolute immutability Christian theologians have succeeded in abridging the divine personality almost or quite to the extent reached by the avowed agnostic. God is allowed to remain as the Supreme Cause of the universe and as its eternal upholder. But whatever else has been alleged which implies a relation of God to men—such as his self-revelation, his work of salvation through Christ, and his function as a prayer-hearing and sympathizing Father—has been held in spite of its absolute inconsistency with those other conceptions, viz., of God's immutability and impassibility. If anything could be more astonishing than this combination of irreconcilable doctrines in one system, it would be the fact that those who have thus combined them have seemed to be serenely unconscious of the self-contradiction. God's love they have held to be his most comprehensive attribute, while yet they have declared him to be incapable of having any feeling; though nothing is more obvious than that love is a feeling. He is declared to hate sin; but hatred is a feeling. He is declared to be supremely happy; but happiness is a feeling. He is declared to turn from indignation to forgiveness, when sinners repent;

but this would be a change in one who is held to be absolutely unchangeable. He is declared to foreknow future events, and therefore to have determined them; but this makes him exist in time, whereas he has been affirmed to exist out of time.

And so we might go on. Apparent inconsistencies in the discussion of such a theme as the divine nature may be hard to avoid. But surely they ought not to be manufactured gratuitously. The notion of a timeless existence—a notion really inconceivable, and serving, in so far as one vainly tries to carry it out, only to darken and deaden all our conceptions of God as a real person—needs simply to be cast away, as being equally repugnant to a rational philosophy and to a sound theology.[1] And the doctrine of immutability needs to be so stated that it shall not deny what is elsewhere stoutly affirmed. If we hold that God's essential attributes—say, of omnipotence and omniscience—must remain unimpaired; if we insist especially that his moral character must remain forever perfect, what more need we say? what more have we a right to say? The attempt to say more, and thus to exclude every trace of flux or change from the life of God, serves only to reduce the divine personality to a minimum.

[1] See my article on *The Metaphysical Idea of Eternity* in the *New Englander*, vol. 34 (1875), where this topic is more fully discussed.

Made incapable of any succession of thoughts, cognitions, feelings, and volitions, God becomes little better than a stolid, staring Sphinx. Instead of exalting his absoluteness, this mode of conception in reality degrades and limits him. It makes him unable to know things as they are, or to come into any active relation to men.[1] For if God heard my prayer yesterday, and also hears it to-day, the one act of hearing must as surely have followed the other as the one act of praying followed the other. Unless the extremest deism is embraced, God must be conceived as constantly active in the world. But if he is, then one act follows another, and God must know that it does. It is only by a process of self-obfuscation that one can come to the notion that there is no succession in the mind and working of the Divine Being.

Of course the fact of God's omniscience involves

[1] Professor Shedd (*Dogm. Theology*, vol. i., p. 346) says: "If the Divine will, like the human, energized successively through the six days of creation, so that in the Divine consciousness the Divine willing on the first day preceded the Divine willing on the second . . . then God, like man or angel, is conscious that two days are longer than one; . . . which is contrary to the statement that 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,' 2 Pet. 3:8." Such a consciousness in God, Dr. Shedd says, would be inconsistent with his omniscience. Now inasmuch as Dr. S. himself holds that two days are longer than one, it follows that, according to his view, God would not be omniscient, if he knew things as they really are. It is easy to assent to his further remark, "It is impossible for the human mind to comprehend, or even to conceive of this."

a difference between his consciousness and ours. He cannot have our experience either of learning or of forgetting. He cannot be taken by surprise, or have alternations of happiness and misery. He cannot be led by new circumstances into the forming of new volitions which he never thought of before. But this only means that he is not so ignorant and limited as we are; it does not require us to think of his mind as *toto cælo* of a different kind from ours—so different that we can have no conception of it, and can describe it only by negations. In this matter the common man has generally had a more accurate sense than the metaphysicians or theologians who, in trying to avoid the inaccuracies and self-contradictions of the popular conceptions, have only created greater puzzles than they have solved.

God, then, is the Absolute One, but he is the Absolute Person. In this statement we unite the two extreme conceptions that have been entertained concerning the Supreme Being. He is absolute. But this simply means that he is self-existent and self-dependent, uncreated and all-creating, self-controlled and all-controlling; it does not mean that he exists out of all relations. And he is personal. Not personal in some vague, shadowy sense that makes us doubt whether there is any reality in it, but personal in such a way that he realizes our highest ideal of a perfect person—a personality that throbs and pulsates

with the purest and most elevated thoughts, with the most intense emotion, and with the holiest and most far-reaching purposes. Beyond a question this is the kind of God who is pictured to us in the Scriptures. While we cannot insist on the literal theological exactness of the rhetorical and Oriental forms of statement which we there find, it is undeniable that there runs all through the sacred pages this conception of God as a genuine person, thinking of men, caring, planning, and working for them, yearning over them, and forbearing with them, with a love of which a father's affection for his children is but a feeble type. There is great need of emphasizing this aspect of the divine nature now. The evolutionary conception of the universe which now dominates the scientific mind tends (though quite unnecessarily) to lead many persons to a deistic view of God's relation to the world. Nature with its forces is thought of as a great system started on its course indefinitely long ago, and working out its evolution, by virtue of indwelling impulses, according to an invariable mechanical method; the living God who is in it, as well as before it, is left out of sight. To the present generation, as well as to the ancient Athenians, there needs to be preached the doctrine of the God in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

2. But God is not fully described by saying

that he is a person, or an infinite person. And the attempt to describe him is an attempt to set forth his attributes. Here we are re-introduced to the antithesis discussed in the previous chapter —that of substance and qualities. As with regard to material objects, so with regard to the divine essence, there is a strong propensity on the part of many to try to do away with the distinction. Augustine undertook to maintain that the essence of God is exhibited in every attribute, and that the several attributes are really not different, but the same. And somewhat such a view has been dominant among Christian theologians down to modern times.[1] From a different point of view a similar doctrine was propounded by Schleiermacher, who makes the common notion of the various divine attributes to be only distinctions which men make, but which have no basis in fact. "All attributes," he says, "which we ascribe to God denote nothing separate in God, but only something separate in the manner in which we refer our feeling of dependence to him." [2]

This tendency can be easily understood. Men

[1] *Cf.* Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*, Discourse IV, where he says, "his understanding is his essence."

[2] *Der christliche Glaube*, i., § 50.—A still more recent attempt to secure unity in the divine attributes is found in Ritschl's notion that love is the primary and fundamental quality of deity, involving all others, even omnipotence, etc., and even preceding in thought personality itself! See his *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., p. 235 *ff.*

believed in the unity of God; and this unity seemed to be impaired, if he was represented as being characterized by a variety of distinct attributes. So although no one could clearly see how God's happiness can be the same thing as his veracity, yet it was thought that this must somehow be the case, rather than that the one God could be analyzed into so many separate phases. The view entertained by the ancient theologians was that the so-called attributes are really nothing but the essence of God himself as variously conceived by men—precisely as the dynamist holds that the so-called qualities of matter are nothing but the essence of the matter, *i. e.*, force, producing various impressions on the percipient mind. But just as dynamism itself in the last analysis issues in a dualism which it has been trying to avoid, so this attempt to do away with the reality of the distinctions between the divine attributes has not been able to maintain itself. The unity and simplicity of the divine essence it is very natural and proper to insist on; but it can never be made out that it is derogatory to the honor or dignity of God that he should possess a diversity of attributes. And what especially works against this old notion is the analogy of the human person. The individual man is a unit; yet no one undertakes to secure and magnify the unity by trying to prove that any one man has in reality no more than one trait. Even if the human faculties were

multiplied indefinitely, every man having as many senses as Voltaire's Micromegas, we should still not regard the individual as any less a unit, but only as a good deal more of a man. It is simply impossible to think of God otherwise than as having different attributes. And if any one is alarmed lest by so thinking he is exposing himself to the dreadful charge of anthropomorphism, let him comfort himself in the assurance that any attempt to avoid this Scylla will only hurl him against the Charybdis of another and worse heresy, which may be designated by an equally bad-sounding term—pseudotheomorphism.

There is after all among Christian thinkers in general little serious difference of conception respecting the divine attributes. As to eternity, omnipotence, and omniscience, all are substantially agreed. And so the divine omnipresence is affirmed with the same unanimity. Only, with regard to this there is not the same identity of conception. In the first place, this attribute is not so sharply to be set off by itself as the others. If God were a material being occupying space, then by his omnipresence would be meant that he is physically present in every part of the universe. But since he is spirit, he cannot be conceived as filling space; so that omnipresence cannot be very sharply distinguished from omniscience and omnipotence. God knows all places and all things; and he can exercise his power everywhere

and over all things. When we have said this, we have virtually affirmed all the omnipresence that can be ascribed to a purely spiritual being. Nevertheless, to guard against one-sided or superstitious conceptions, such as tend to limit God's interest and activity to certain localities, it is well to speak of omnipresence as a distinct attribute.

But, furthermore, in reference to the divine omnipresence a certain antithesis of view has manifested itself, on which it may be well to dwell a little. The antithesis is expressed in the words transcendence and immanence. The first suggests a separation, if not even a distance, between God and the world. The second suggests that God is present as an indwelling force in everything. The doctrine of transcendence, one-sidedly insisted on, is deism; the doctrine of immanence, one-sidedly insisted on, is pantheism. But transcendence, in the crude sense that God dwells in the heavens apart, leaving the world to be moved and governed by its own forces, has hardly ever been held by any thinking men, even deists. Still what is called deism does involve a recognition of the reality of natural laws and forces, and denies the reality of any divine supernatural interference with them. It is with reference to this point that the doctrine of the divine immanence comes into the sharpest contrast with that of transcendence. At the present time

there is in Christian theology a very strong current towards the doctrine that there are in reality no forces inherent in natural things, but that all force is divine force directly efficient wherever any activity takes place.[1] The "secondary causes," of which we used to hear so much, are declared to be non-existent. According to this conception of things, it would not be strictly correct to say that a tree produces fruit, or that a tornado destroys a building; we should rather say that a divine energy operating in the tree produces the fruit. In this way God is brought very near to us. We see his immediate doings all around us.

Now this must be pronounced to be in the main a wholesome tendency of the times.[2] It is favored by some currents of scientific thought. Atheistic or pantheistic thinkers, like Schopenhauer or Herbert Spencer, speak of a blind will or force which underlies all the operations of nature. Theistic thinkers regard that force as the ever-present force of the divine will. In either case less stress is laid on the inherent force of material things—more, on the one supreme energy which pervades the universe.

[1] *E. g.*, Lyman Abbott, *Theology of an Evolutionist*, p. 9: "I believe that . . . there are no laws of nature which are not the laws of God's own being; that there are no forces of nature."

[2] It is, like many other so-called "new" views, a very old one, especially emphasized by Clement of Alexandria and others. See A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, pp. 45 *ff*.

At the same time there is danger that here, as in other cases of reaction, we may be carried too far. In the first place, injustice is often done to those whose views are supposed to be replaced by the doctrine of the divine immanence. That God is omnipresent, has never been denied, but always maintained, in the Christian Church. And since it has not been held that he is physically diffused through space, the meaning has been that his intelligence and his power have to do with all things. Moreover, the prevalent tendency of religious thought and feeling has been to see in the works of nature the hand of God—the expression of divine wisdom and goodness. Witness the language of our hymns, such as this:

> There 's not a plant or flower below,
> But makes thy glories known;
> And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
> By order from thy throne.

The same faith in the universality of God's agency is betokened by the common conception of Divine Providence. When men pray God to give them health and temporal blessings, and when they recognize all their daily experiences as sent to them by their Heavenly Father, they certainly cannot be said to regard him as a God afar off and practically disconnected from the world with which we have to do.

But, in the second place, there is danger of over-pressing the notion of the divine immanence itself. In denying the existence of secondary causes, and affirming that all the operations of the natural world are the immediate workings of the divine will, some go so far as to affirm that the distinction between nature and the supernatural is thus obliterated. Nature, they say, is the sphere in which God acts and manifests himself; the laws of nature are the laws of God; so that there can be no sphere above the natural, and consequently there can be no supernatural intervention—no miracle—interrupting or altering the course of natural events.

This extreme conclusion does not indeed necessarily follow from the doctrine of divine immanence. If God is conceived to be a real person with a free will, he certainly must be supposed to be able, whenever there is occasion, to depart from his ordinary method of working; and such departure would be equally a miracle, whether natural forces are identical with divine energy, or are something distinct from that energy, but now and then interfered with by a divine fiat. In either case the divine action is of an *exceptional* sort; and that is all that is necessary to the conception of a miracle. But some writers who admit the fact of miracles regard the conception of divine immanence as somehow relieving the subject of miracles of the difficulty which otherwise

burdens it. Thus one essayist[1] argues that in the miracles of Christ only the ordinary forces of nature were operative, but that they were accelerated in their operation. For instance, in the case of the water made into wine, he says. "It is not necessary to postulate a new force, because the process of transformation was effected in so brief a period of time, and was, moreover, secret, hidden, and invisible, without those apparent instrumentalities by which such transformation is ordinarily effected." Now if it is really meant that none but the ordinary agencies were employed in the alleged miracle; if "no new force" was employed, but only the old ones operating rapidly,—then there must at least have been a grape-vine, the growth of grape-clusters, the operation of sun and soil on the vine, etc., as a part of the "process"; for these are always involved in the natural process of making wine. But did any one ever seriously imagine that Jesus accomplished his miracle by any "invisible" acceleration of all this natural process? Moreover, even if we should imagine all this, we must remember that, in order to the "transformation" effected, the water which had been previously in the water-pots must have been poured out into the ground, and thence drawn up into the grape-

[1] Rev. James Douglass, D.D., in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (October, 1888). This view of miracles is an old one indeed. On it see, further, my *Supernatural Revelation*, pp. 104–111.

vine, in order there to undergo the process of being changed into grape-juice. Then the juice had to be expressed, rapidly fermented, and finally poured back into the water-pots. By what accelerated "natural" process was all this done? The whole conception is almost too grotesque to be treated seriously.

But even if our imagination is lively enough to conceive of this alleged acceleration of the natural process, we find at last that the real original difficulty, which was to have been removed by the hypothesis, remains untouched. What was aimed at was relief from the necessity of assuming a *special* divine agency, a "new force," as distinguished from the ordinary so-called natural forces. These ordinary forces are supposed to do the whole work, only in an exceptional way. But it is just this exceptionalness that needs to be explained. *What is the force which accelerates the ordinary forces*, or otherwise makes them produce an exceptional result? This can be nothing else than a *special* divine agency, applied for a *special* reason by a *special* divine volition. In short, we have to make essentially the same assumption as is made by the extremest supernaturalist in his theory of miracles.

Apart, however, from the question of the miraculous, the affirmation, that a correct view of the divine immanence requires us to abandon the notion of secondary causes, is a very questionable

one. Let us look at it more narrowly. All agree that natural phenomena are commonly ascribed to the working of natural forces. These forces may be viewed either dynamistically or atomistically. Let us first adopt the dynamistic theory, that the things which we seem to see operating are nothing but pure, unextended points of force. Then we are told by the advocates of the doctrine of divine immanence that these forces are nothing else than forms of divine energy—that they are really God himself acting so and so. But inasmuch as the whole visible universe is made up of substances which are thus resolved into forms of divine energy, it follows that these substances are a part of God—if not the whole of him. For divine energy, on the theory in question, can hardly be anything but God energizing. And so it might, with scarcely any exaggeration, be said that according to it the farmer plows God into furrows, or that the miser treasures God in his bags, even if not in his heart. A theory of the divine immanence which invites or allows such a conception must be regarded with suspicion.

If now we adopt the atomistic theory of matter, the doctrine of divine immanence which denies the existence of secondary causes must be stated somewhat as follows: The material atoms are a product of divine creation, but are distinct from God. They have, however, no energy of their

own. What they seem to do God directly does in them or through them. The atoms of oxygen have no inherent tendency to unite with iron; but God by his direct energy brings these different substances into that union which is called oxidation. Accordingly it is not correct to speak of things as having qualities. All matter is of itself dead, inert, forceless, destitute of characteristics, doing nothing and making no impressions. Strictly speaking, therefore, we cannot properly distinguish the atoms into different kinds—carbon, hydrogen, etc.—for this would imply that they have inherent characteristics by which they differ from one another; whereas in reality the only difference which we know of is that God by his immediate energy makes some atoms act in one way, and others in another.

Now it needs little argument to show that such a view of things cannot maintain itself. Though it is the one which logically follows from some statements of the doctrine of the divine immanence, it is doubtless safe to assume that few, if any, would be willing to carry their doctrine out to this extreme. Certainly scientific men cannot be adduced as sanctioning such a conception of things. If there are atomic substances, there are atomic qualities, which may properly be regarded as inseparable from the substances. In other words, we must assume the reality of secondary causes.

The same men who are inclined to resolve all the activity of nature into immediate divine agency, are often just those who most emphatically affirm the reality of secondary causes, when the activity under consideration is that of human free agents. There, they admit, the divine efficiency is not direct and absolute; the human will, they hold, is a real cause. But the same general considerations which lead to the denial of secondary causes in material nature are equally valid with regard to human beings. If it is possible for God to make a race of creatures that can be possessed of a relative independence, acting responsibly, and not mere playthings of an irresistible power above them, then there can be no good reason for denying that he can have made material things that are possessed of qualities of their own which may properly be said to produce effects.

Probably the difference of opinion on this point is not so great as the disputants themselves sometimes imagine. Except downright atheists and pantheists, none deny the separate reality of the Creator and the created world. This distinction is affirmed in the doctrine of the divine transcendence. This doctrine affirms that God is not identical with the world, nor limited to it in his thoughts and activities. But it does not assert that the world is independent of God. He created it, and in doing so gave it the form and

the forces which it has. He constantly upholds the world which he made. All its activities are therefore in a true sense his work, being involved in his eternal plan, and made possible only by his continual preservation. Here is the truth in the doctrine of the divine immanence.[1]

With regard to the so-called moral attributes of God, there is also in general little diversity of view among Christian thinkers. That God is infinitely holy, wise, faithful, veracious, righteous, and benevolent,—this is a proposition which scarcely any one would hesitate to adopt. Nevertheless, some divergencies of view manifest themselves when we come to more exact definitions and analysis. There is particularly one point in respect to which there has sometimes been developed a considerably sharp antithesis. I refer to the relation of righteousness to love in the divine character. Are they in any sense antithetic to each other? And if so, which holds the relation of priority? This question has been answered in opposite ways. Probably it is true that at the present time the great majority of Christian theologians are inclined to say that love is the great and comprehensive moral attribute of God. A prominent representative of this view is Ritschl, who even makes love to be the very essence of God, and thinks that righteousness is

[1] *Cf.* W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Doctrine*, p. 130, 4th ed.

in the Bible practically only another name for love. On the other hand, we find such a man as the late Professor Shedd stoutly maintaining that justice is the paramount attribute. "The eternal Judge," he says, "may or may not exercise mercy, but he must exercise justice." [1] That there is an apparent contrariety between the virtues of love and justice, cannot be denied. In human relations the two feelings often come into conflict. Justice means giving one his exact due. Love, in the form of mercy, often pleads that merited punishment may be remitted. It seems certainly difficult to identify the two impulses, whether they can be reconciled or not. But there are certain considerations which serve to mitigate the sharpness of the apparent antithesis.

(*a*) Love, especially as an attribute of God, must have reference to all men, and must imply a desire to promote the greatest good of all. Mere pity towards a criminal might prompt one to let him off; but regard for the general good may require his punishment. Justice towards the individual may therefore be necessitated by love to the race in general. In such a relation there is no inconsistency or collision between the two attributes, though still they are very distinct. As exercised towards any one individual or nation the two impulses often seem to pull in oppo-

[1] *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. ii., p. 436. Similarly in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. xvi. (1859), p. 738.

site directions. This conflict is very frequently found pictured in the Old Testament, where God is represented as struggling between the demands of justice and compassion: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, and my compassions are kindled together" (Hos. xi. 8). If human analogy furnishes any indication of God's feelings towards sinful men, then we may properly judge that in him the feeling of love and the sense of justice do contend with one another. And why should they not? The only plausible objection to such a supposition is that which arises from the notion that God is perfectly blessed, and that such a conflict of emotions would mar his blessedness; or, on the other hand, that God has no emotions of any kind, and therefore cannot be agitated by any conflict of emotions. As for the latter notion, it has already been considered. As for the notion that God's perfect blessedness makes a conflict of emotions impossible, it is sufficient to ask how any one ever found out that God is blessed in precisely that sense. It is remarkable how little the Scriptures have to say on this point. Only twice [1] in the whole collection is there any hint

[1] Some writers (*e. g.*, Shedd, *Dogm. Theol.*, vol. i., p. 178; Charnock, *Existence and Attributes of God*, p. 217, Rel. Tract Soc. edition), in their zeal to maintain the doctrine of the divine happiness, refer to such passages as Rom. ix. 5, where

that the writers thought of happiness as a feature of the divine experience. The two passages are both found in the First Epistle to Timothy (i. 11; vi. 15); and there the word μακάριος is used simply as an epithet—"the glorious gospel of the blessed God," "the blessed and only Potentate"—but there is nothing here said about the perfection of the blessedness. That God is predominantly a happy being, no one need question; but the assumption that his happiness is absolutely unsullied by the sins and miseries of the world, is a mere assumption, without a particle of proof. If God is a real person at all, and has real feelings, it is impossible to see how there should not be an element of unhappiness in him in view of the wretchedness and guilt of his creatures, so that, if we are to reason from human analogy, we might almost wonder how he can be happy at all.

(*b*) The apparent clashing between the love and the justice of God is relieved by regarding them both as phases of *rightness*. In other words, whatever God is or does is right. If he loves men, it is right that he should love them. And if it is right, he is under moral *obligation* to love. If he forgives, he *ought* to forgive, just as on the other hand we may say that, if he punishes, he ought to punish. To say that God may be merciful or not

God is called "blessed." But here the Greek is εὐλογητός, and gives no suggestion of happiness, any more than the numerous passages in the O. T. where "blessed" is the translation of בָּרוּךְ.

as he pleases, but that he must be just, implies that the exercise of mercy is a purely optional matter, in such a sense that God would be equally holy, whether he is merciful or not. But in that case the exercise of mercy is either made a matter of indifference, morally considered, or else is put into the category of works of supererogation. But neither of these positions can be defended before the bar of any sound ethics.

The confusion of thought that often besets this topic comes from not observing the distinction between duties which one owes to himself and duties which may be exacted from one by another. If I owe my neighbor a sum of money, not only is it my duty to pay him, but he has a right to demand the payment as his due. But if my neighbor through his thriftlessness and dissoluteness has impoverished himself, though I may deem it my duty to give him pecuniary relief, yet *he* cannot *demand* the relief as something due from me to him. To *him* the gift comes as an act of charity—as a work of supererogation. Duties and rights are not always reciprocal. If what a benevolent man thinks it his duty to do to a person in trouble should be regarded by this person as his *right*, the blessedness of charity on the one side and the blessedness of gratitude on the other would be obliterated. The application of this distinction to the relations between God and men is obvious. No man can *demand* the

forgiveness of his sins. If forgiveness is granted, it is an unmerited favor, for which gratitude and praise is the appropriate response. Nevertheless, in view of all things and persons concerned, God may regard it as best to exercise forgiveness. If he does, it must be to *him* a moral act; it is something which he either *ought* to do or *ought not* to do, so far as his own moral sense is concerned. And there can be no question which part of the alternative is the correct one.

Now God in fact loves all men, "the evil and the good," impartially (Matt. v. 45); and he does not inflict on all sinners the execution of strict justice. And since, in whatever he does, God acts righteously, doing what he feels himself morally bound to do, we may infer that the maxim above quoted needs to be reversed: instead of saying, "God may be merciful, but he must be just," it would be nearer the truth to say, "God may be just, but he must be merciful"; though this too would be open to the objection that it represents it as equally right for God to do, or to forbear doing, a given thing. Reference is here made to punitive justice; and the first half of the proposition holds true only in the sense that the sinner would have no ground of complaint, even if strict justice were dealt out to him. What is called rectoral or general justice is virtually equivalent to general benevolence; and this can in no case be waived.

(*c*) The apparent conflict between God's love and his justice is further relieved by a careful consideration of what divine love is, and what it embraces. Love is often regarded as consisting in a desire to promote another person's happiness. And as no one is made happy by being punished, it is inferred that God's love to sinful men must prompt him to refrain from punishing them. But this conception of love is purely eudæmonistic; it implies that happiness is the highest good. Love, impossible as it is to give a full and accurate definition of it, cannot in its purest form fall short of a desire for the highest good of the object of love; and this highest good is not happiness, but holiness. In order to the attainment of it an experience of discipline and suffering may be necessary. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. xii. 6). And even though the discipline or punishment fails to benefit the direct object of it, God's love of moral beings in general must require him to make it evident that to him the promotion of righteousness is more imperative than the promotion of mere happiness. Love itself, therefore, leads him to inflict on men the suffering which wickedness merits.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the love of God is directed towards himself as well as towards his creatures; it must include a jealous regard for his authority as the world's Sovereign, and a determination to maintain the honor of his

moral law. Justice itself, therefore, is dictated and secured by the divine self-love.[1]

These considerations do not prove that love and justice are identical; but they do serve to indicate that there is no collision between them. They also serve to show that, as between love and distributive justice, love rather than justice is the paramount attribute. It is also obvious that one's view of the relation between God's love and his punitive justice has an important bearing on his theory of redemption. Without here entering upon a particular discussion of this theme, two remarks may be made: (1) It is admitted on both sides that it is God's love which moves him to redeem sinners, so that in its inception the work is one of benevolence rather than of distributive justice. (2) On no theory of redemption can it be maintained that punitive (or distributive) justice is secured. We are told indeed by one of the advocates of the priority of justice to love, that "God is immutably determined, by his own eternal and essential righteousness, to visit every sin with a proportionate punishment";[2] and by another,[3] that "the claim of law upon the transgressor for punishment is absolute and indefeasible." But whatever may be proved to be the fact in respect to vicarious punishment, even

[1] See Dorner, *System der christlichen Glaubenslehre*, § 32.
[2] A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, p. 124.
[3] W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. ii., p. 436.

though it could be made out that the substitute suffers, to an iota, the same amount of suffering that is due to the sinner, it cannot be maintained that strict punitive justice is executed; for this requires that not an innocent substitute, but that the sinner himself, should be punished. If the substitute were an *unwilling* sufferer, it would be manifest to all, not only that strict justice is not executed, but that a double injustice is committed. If the substitute should suffer willingly, then the virtue and efficacy of his suffering would depend upon the *love* which makes him willing to suffer—a love which co-operates, and is essentially one, with the divine love that institutes the work of redemption.

CHAPTER III

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN FREEDOM. THE PROBLEM IN GENERAL

HE must have a large measure of self-confidence who thinks himself able to solve, or to make any important contribution towards solving, the old problem of liberty *vs.* necessity, or human freedom *vs.* divine sovereignty. A much easier and less ambitious task is it to show that the problem is insoluble. But whether one aims at this or that conclusion respecting the matter, it must be maintained that the question is one with which theology has a very vital concern; it is a fundamental question, and one that cannot be shirked.

For however irreconcilable the two doctrines may seem to be, and however fierce the conflict between them may have been, yet *both* of them, in one form or another, have been held by Christians of every name. By some the sovereignty of God has been emphasized, and human freedom has been reduced to its lowest limits; by others the liberty and responsibility of man have been made disproportionately prominent. But no con-

siderable part of Christendom ever denied either doctrine *in toto*. The early Greek fathers, while admitting the depraving and disabling effects of sin, yet jealously asserted the freedom of even fallen man. Augustine and his followers, while affirming the full freedom of Adam, as he was before the fall, yet contended that, since the fall, the will of man is enslaved. But inasmuch as Adam was regarded as having acted for the race, and all men as having been virtually in him, Adam's free act in sinning was made to safeguard the moral responsibility of all men and to justify the sentence of condemnation pronounced on all individual sinners. Augustine, however, found a Pelagius to contend with; and although the extreme doctrine of free will, as Pelagius advocated it, was generally rejected by the Church, yet Augustine's doctrine failed to gain general approval. There was a large reaction into a kind of compromise position—Semi-pelagianism. At the Reformation, however, the leading Reformers reverted to the Augustinian doctrine, which nevertheless was in turn followed by the Arminian reaction, in consequence of which the Protestant churches have been to this day more or less divided as regards the question of free will. Apart from these larger oscillations, there have been at all times and in all places more or less difference and controversy respecting this vexed question. At the present time churches which

are in their historical relations Calvinistic have, to a considerable degree, abandoned the strictly Calvinistic doctrine.

But the case is not that of one church, or one community, or even of one individual, against another in regard to the antithesis of free will and divine sovereignty. It may as truly be said that the conflict is one that is fought by the individual against himself. There are in every thoughtful religious man impulses and considerations which move him to adopt both of the antithetic doctrines, whether he can reconcile them or not. For although the problem may be treated as a mere dialectical puzzle, it is in fact an emphatically religious one. Religion involves a conscious relation of man to God; and in so far as it is vital, the religious man cannot but have a more or less definite conception of what God is to him and what he is to God. To every intelligent theist, and still more to every earnest Christian, God is a Sovereign—the Maker and Ruler of the universe, the one supreme object of worship and of service, the universal Moral Governor, to whom all are responsible, and who by his infinite wisdom, holiness, and power is planning and working to establish a kingdom of righteousness among the moral beings over whom he is the Sovereign. On the other hand, these moral agents regard themselves as morally responsible to God, as capable of obeying and disobeying him, and as receiving

his approval or disapproval according to their moral conduct. The two doctrines imply and complement one another. Neither can stand alone. Together they constitute in every man the basis of all true religion. And it is just because of the vital importance and the close connection of the two phases of faith, that in adjusting them to one another in a doctrinal way one seems to be involved in inconsistencies or contradictions.

Yet it is not in the sphere of practical religion that this problem becomes acute. It is only when men begin to theorize, that a contradiction or collision seems to arise; and the trouble is by no means confined to theological thinking. On the contrary, the antithesis of determinism and moral freedom is, we may say, pre-eminently a philosophical problem; and the problem may be debated with the greatest zest on one side or the other by men who have no religious interest in it whatsoever. The difficulty is a simple and familiar one: Every phenomenon or event must have a cause; a cause determines the effect; the effect is a necessary result of the cause. But a volition is a phenomenon or event requiring a cause; and whatever its cause may be, the effect must be necessary. But if it is necessary, how can the man who exercises it be held responsible for it? How can he be regarded as able at any given time to will otherwise than he does will?

The most obvious alternative to necessity is

chance. An event not caused by anything would be an event happening by chance. Some philosophers have indeed held that there is no such thing as causation—that all which can be perceived is a certain uniform order of succession, but that we have no right to posit any necessary causal connection between any two things. If that were a correct conclusion, then everything that happens would have to be regarded as fortuitous. But in fact no one—not even the philosophers just mentioned—ever really believed any such thing. The notion of causality is ineradicable. It runs through all our thinking. It asserts itself in fact even when it is denied in form. The advocates of the reality of the freedom of the human will do not adopt the doctrine of chance.[1] It is not held

[1] Prof. William James, in his essay on *The Dilemma of Determinism* (in *The Will to Believe*, etc.), uses "chance" in preference to "freedom"; but, although somewhat vague in his definition, he can hardly be understood as using it in the strict sense. Leslie Stephen (*Science of Ethics*, p. 290) says that "chance" is a mere name for ignorance, and that "necessity," "probability," etc., "are simply names of the observer's state of mind, which, by one of the most familiar of fallacies, are supposed to denote qualities of the thing observed." No doubt, "chance" is often used, when it is a mere name for our uncertainty or ignorance; but one of the meanings of the word is an event happening without a cause. Whether there are such events is another matter. But the assertion that "necessity" is a mere name of a man's "state of mind" is true only in the sense that *every* word used is a name for a man's state of mind. If I say that a marble is round, the remark of course expresses a state of my mind; but it means also that the marble *is* round. So if I say that

that a man merely *happens* to will in such and such a way. It is recognized that volitions are exercised for certain *reasons*. The influence of motives is not denied. A volition without any motive or reason back of it would have no more moral character than an act to which one is forced against his will. By general consent moral choices are not fortuitous, uncaused, absolutely capricious things. But if volitions are caused, are they not necessary? And then how can they be free?

When the problem is put in this simple way, it is manifest that the determinist seems to have the best of the argument. Over against him the anti-determinist can set his *feeling* of freedom; but this can be met by the undeniable fact that one's feelings are often deceptive. No one pretends that volitions are *obviously* forced on any one. But may they not be just as really necessitated as the unobserved processes within the body? So again, when it is argued that the *deliberation* which precedes a volition proves the freedom of choice, the obvious reply is, Why the deliberation? Is there not a *reason* why the man deliberates? The longer and more earnestly one considers his course before taking action, the more obvious is it that he must have grave reasons for hesitation. Or again, when it is said that, though no

the marble laid on an inclined plane, and not obstructed in its tendency to remove, *must* roll down, the necessity thus asserted is no more exclusively a state of my mind than the roundness is.

one can act morally without motives, yet a man exercises his freedom in choosing *which* motive to follow, the determinist is ready with the question, *Why* does he choose this motive rather than that? What motive has he for his choice? And so we are still in the charmed circle of apparent necessity.

A favorite method of meeting the determinist is to say that a moral agent is himself the cause of his moral acts—a sort of first cause; so that it is needless to inquire what causes the man to will, since his willing is an ultimate fact. But this does not remove the difficulty. For either the man, when he wills, has no reason for making one choice rather than another—in which case his volition is a purely capricious, fortuitous thing, and therefore without any moral character—or else he has a reason for his choices; and this reason is the *cause* why he wills as he does.—It does not remove the metaphysical difficulty to say (as is often said) that the realm of moral freedom is entirely distinct from that of natural causation. It may be admitted that mind and matter are distinct, and that the laws of *physical* causation do not operate in the sphere of ethics. But if it is affirmed that there is *no cause* for moral choices, then again this can be understood only as meaning that the choices are matters of pure chance, formed for no reason, and therefore destitute of moral worth.—Nor does it afford any material

relief to be told (as we sometimes are) that the whole notion of causation first comes from the individual's finding himself able to produce effects by the exertion of his will. Now this proposition can never be shown to be universally true. But even if it were, it is one thing to learn how a notion arises, and quite another to determine what the notion is. The actual notion of causation is that everywhere—not only in the world of matter, but in the world of spirit—there is a *reason* for all things, that nothing takes place uncaused. The mind is irresistibly impelled so to think. Now it does not satisfy this impulse to say of any particular act of human volition, that the man causes it, and that we can go no further back. We still ask, *Why* does the man act so and so? And it is only a childish answer to reply, "Because he wants to." It is therefore no solution of the mystery of moral freedom to say that a man chooses by virtue of his sovereign power to choose. We still ask, Why does he choose in one way, and not in another? Why does *one* man choose in one way, and *another* in another? [1] And whether we trace the difference to heredity, to environment, to divine agency, or to anything else, we find ourselves dealing with a problem of causation. And since everywhere else causation means necessitation, the problem, how the will

[1] See Pres. Jeremiah Day's *Examination of Edwards on the Freedom of the Will*, p. 102.

can be free and unnecessitated in its volitions, remains still unsolved.

So much from a metaphysical point of view, where the causality in question is considered abstractly, or is regarded as an impersonal power or complex of forces. When we come to the more religious aspect of the question, all that is valid in the preceding considerations remains equally valid still. Only the influences and motives which have been assumed to be operative in causing volitions are now traced ultimately to the purpose and power of a Divine Person. If there is any difference in the aspect of the problem, it is that now we speak of divine influences *additional* to those that may be summed up under the heads of innate constitution and temperament and outward environment. God as a Moral Governor is conceived as working in a supernatural, or at least in an invisible and untraceable, way, upon the hearts and minds of his moral subjects, in order to accomplish his sovereign purposes. This manifestly rather aggravates than relieves the problem before us.

In view then of the difficulty of proving, or even of conceiving, the fact of moral freedom, the question naturally arises, Why should we try to prove that there is such a thing? Why not rather admit that we *must* act as we do act, and adjust ourselves to this conception of things? Why do we contend that there must be in us a power of

contrary choice—a power, under any given conditions, to will otherwise than we actually do will? The answer to this question is of course to be found in the verdict of the moral sense. The ethical judgment is as imperative as the judgment of causality. The notion of right and wrong is a fundamental fact in human consciousness. With this goes the sense of *obligation* to do the right and avoid the wrong; and with this again, the judgment that right conduct is praiseworthy, and wrong conduct blameworthy. Criminals are punished; and no defense of such punishment is sound which does not affirm that they *deserve* punishment. Ethical worth is a category all by itself. There are many other things which are excellent, and many others which are offensive; but impersonal things, or even brutes, are never *blamed* for being disagreeable. Whatever *must* be as it is cannot be exposed to moral condemnation. It is only moral agents who are held *guilty*; and they are held guilty for being or doing what they *ought* not to be or to do. And when it is said that they ought not to be what they are, it is always implied that they *might* have been other than they are. But this is equivalent to an affirmation of the existence of a freedom of choice. This is the short method of proving the fact of moral freedom. No other method is satisfactory, and no other is necessary.

When President Edwards is engaged in showing

up the logical weakness of the Arminians in their defense of the doctrine of volitional freedom, he marches along with the strength of an undaunted and victorious hero. He strews his way with the wrecks of riddled arguments. He seems to leave to his opponents no way of escape. But when he comes to the matter of the blameworthiness of wicked conduct, he can only insist that wickedness is intrinsically odious, and that a bad man is condemned all the more, the more impossible it seems to be for him to resist his bad impulses. But he does not meet and answer the question, Why *blame* a *man* for certain traits, when similar traits in a beast are not blamed? What is meant by saying that a bad man *ought* to be or to do otherwise, while no one ever thinks of saying that a hyena is to be reproached for his foul and sneaky ways, and ought to be a different kind of beast? This question is not to be answered by saying that, man being a higher order of creature than a beast, his conduct has a moral character while a beast's has not. What is *moral* character? Not simply behavior which may be called disagreeable or injurious; for these traits may be found in bestial behavior, or even in the behavior of inanimate things. Morality is that which it is a man's *duty* to have, that which he is rightly blamed for not having—something, therefore, which he *can* attain, and which he is responsible for not attaining. This element of duty—of *obli-*

gation—is altogether unique, and necessarily carries with it moral freedom. Deny the freedom, and you deny the blameworthiness of bad conduct, whether the agent be an angel or an insect. Accordingly it is not strange that many of the more thoroughgoing and consistent determinists theoretically abandon the notion of moral responsibility. But it is questionable whether any of them ever carried out this doctrine consistently in practical life, either in reference to themselves or to their fellow-men. It *could* not be carried out generally; for all social and political, as well as religious, life rests upon the assumption of the fact of the moral responsibility of men; a general practical denial of it would involve the absolute disruption of all corporate human life.

So then we find ourselves standing between two conflicting doctrines, each of which seems to rest on an immovable foundation. What shall be done? The case is not like the one discussed in the previous chapter, where the opposing views are brought together by concessions and corrections on both sides. There seems here to be no room for compromise; the antithesis is too simple, sharp, and absolute for such an adjustment. Between a will necessitated to choose in one way, and a will able to exercise an option, there appears to be no middle ground. Must we then make an exclusive choice between the antithetic doctrines? This may seem to be the only logical

course. Many have adopted it; but since some reject one side of the antithesis, and others the other, no progress is thus made towards a general reconciliation; the confusion is only worse confounded. And in fact each of the tenets is such a direct corollary from fundamental intuitions of the soul, that it is apparently only by a one-sided or utterly capricious decision that one can reject either in favor of the other. Two other courses are open: to reject both, or to accept both. The first of these could only mean shutting one's eyes to the whole problem—a lazy agnosticism, open to all the theoretical objections that may be urged against the second, and having none of its advantages. This second method—the acceptance of both the antithetic doctrines—seems then to be the only eligible one.

Of course objectors will be at once ready with the allegation that this is pure self-stultification—that it is impossible at the same time to believe a proposition and the exact contradictory of it. No doubt if we had to do with a purely logical proposition, the objection would be well taken. If one be required to hold that the will is free, and that it is not free, at one and the same time and in the same sense, he cannot but rebel at the requirement. We must consider, however, that we are dealing with a theme respecting which absolutely simple and unequivocal statements are not easy to make. There is an element of mystery in the

operations of the emotional and moral nature, which, even when man is considered only in a psychological way, leads to very various conclusions. When we combine with this the question of the relation of human volitions to the divine agency, the mystery is made still deeper. The most earnest attempt to discern and recognize all the facts of consciousness and intuition leads us in two opposite directions. On the one hand, the moral sense leads us to assert for ourselves a genuine independence; on the other, our metaphysical and religious sense leads us to a conviction of our absolute dependence on the Divine Being. But the manner in which a free volition is related to motives is mysterious; and equally or more mysterious is the nature of our connection with God. When we have done our best in thinking out and expressing what the facts are in reference to these relations, we cannot but be painfully conscious that our propositions are inadequate to set forth the whole and exact truth. We are led irresistibly into antithetic conclusions; they tend to become even mutually contradictory; but we can only say that, while such seems to be a necessary tendency, we must assume that this apparent contradiction is not a real one, and that perhaps in the other life, if never in this, we shall be able to see what the reconciliation is. The case is quite analogous to what is sometimes found in scientific speculations. For example,

astronomical theories and calculations respecting the motions of the heavenly bodies have depended on the assumption of the absolute emptiness of the interstellar and interplanetary spaces. But the phenomena of solar light and heat have led to the assumption that those spaces are totally filled. Now it is easy to say that they cannot at once be empty and not empty. Yet the best that the most thorough research can do leads towards just this contradiction. There is a great mystery about the whole matter; perhaps some of us may live to learn of the real solution of it; perhaps not.

In this conflict of the ages over the matter of divine sovereignty and human freedom it is certain that all the wranglings and arguments have as yet failed to effect an agreement. The advocates of neither of the opposing doctrines have been convinced by the others; and no attempts at mediation have been successful. These attempts are marked, now by a preponderance ascribed to the divine agency, and now by a preponderance ascribed to the human agency. The difficulty of the problem may be illustrated by a brief notice of some of these efforts.

Leaning towards the deterministic side, some writers attempt a mediation by alleging that, as one man may bring motives and influences to bear upon another, the effect of which he can certainly foresee, so God may do the same with all

men. Yet in either case the man who is influenced has no sense of being coerced; he is perfectly free; he does as he pleases, whether or not he is conscious of being influenced from without. Accordingly, it is argued, God can so work upon the minds and wills of men that they will do precisely what the divine decrees have determined, and yet will have all the time the consciousness of being perfectly free and unconstrained.[1]

In this theory the divine sovereignty is thoroughly safeguarded. God's decrees are made to cover everything; and he makes sure of their being fulfilled by his own efficient agency in working on the minds of moral beings so as to execute the divine purposes. But what about human freedom? Men *think* they are free, no doubt. But are they really so, when God foreordains all that they ever do, and by his own agency makes *sure* that they shall do just what is foreordained? Is not this virtual necessarianism? To this many answer, "No, God only makes human action *certain;* he does not make it *necessary.*" Or, as one theologian[2] puts it, "All things are predestinated by God, both good and evil, but not pre*necessitated.*" This is a subtle

[1] See this view ably set forth in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1847 by J. W. Ward in the article on the *Consistency of God's Purposes with Man's Free Agency.*

[2] John Forbes, *Predestination and Freewill*, p. 3. Quoted approvingly by Pres. A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 176.

distinction and requires consideration. What is meant by "certainty"? The word is susceptible of various definitions, so that disputants are liable to mutual misunderstanding. Some would define "certainty" to be equivalent to "futurity."[1] That is, what will be is certain to be. But this is ambiguous. It may be regarded as virtually an identical proposition: What is certain to be is certain to be. If this is not meant, then we have still to inquire what "certainty" does mean. And we must decide between the objective and the subjective sense. When I say, "Such a thing is certain to happen to-morrow," my meaning may be, "I am certain—morally convinced—that it will happen." But this subjective sense is not the one which theologians have in mind when they distinguish between the certainty and the necessity of future events. The objective necessity and the subjective certainty go very well together: Because I know that a thing *must* be, therefore I am *certain* that it will be. But we must try to conceive of the certainty as an objective certainty, if the distinction between it and necessity is to be made of any account. What, then, is the distinction? By the *necessity* of an event is meant that the forces or causes which produce it *compel* the result; it cannot but happen. What else is meant when a future event is said to be objectively *certain*? We as instinc-

[1] So Whedon, *Freedom of the Will*, p. 57.

tively think that it is *made* certain as we think that the necessary event is made necessary. If it is *certain* to happen, then it cannot but happen; for if it possibly will not happen, then its happening is not *certain*. A necessary event is certain; and a certain event is necessary. The distinction, so far as there is any, is this: In affirming the *necessity* of an event we suggest the thought of the causal connection between the event and its antecedents; in affirming the *certainty* of an event we abstract more from the conception of the causation of it, and confine ourselves more absolutely to the mere fact. The opposite of necessity is contingency; the opposite of certainty is doubtfulness. In the one case we say, "The thing *must* be, because its antecedents compel it to be"; in the other we say, "The thing *will* be; there is no doubt of the fact." The subjective element of mental assurance thus creeps in when we speak of certainty. But in so far as we exclude the subjective element from our conception, we make necessity and certainty virtually synonymous. If an event is necessary, it is so because of an indissoluble connection between it and its cause or causes. And no other kind of connection between cause and effect can be meant when a future event is said to be *certain* to take place. There can be no degrees of certainty any more than of necessity. If a thing *must* happen, it *will* happen. If it is certain to happen, it *will*

happen. There is no more doubt in one case than in the other. It cannot be meant that there is a looser connection between cause and effect in this case than in the other. In reference to physical phenomena this is very clear. If, other things remaining unchanged, the trunk of a tree is chopped in two, it may be said, "The tree *must* fall," or, "The tree will *certainly* fall." In either case it is meant that there is an infallible causal connection between the chopping and the falling. The necessity is *affirmed* in one case, and *implied* in the other. When certainty is affirmed, there is an indirect or obscure reference to the subjective mood of the speaker. It is as if one said, "There is such an infallible causal connection between the chopping and the falling that *I* am *certain* that the tree will fall." But in so far as the certainty is made an objective matter there is absolutely no difference between it and necessity.

This being manifestly true of physical phenomena, it is hardly too much to say of the distinction between certainty and necessity, when used with reference to volitional acts, that it is a distinction without a difference.[1] If one holds that, in regard to future volitions of free agents, there is a real contingency, so that the issue cannot be known till after it is decided, then this is

[1] "We have no other way of proving that anything *certainly* will be, but only by the necessity of the event."—Pres. Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, Part IV, ch. xi.

the same as saying that the issue, up to the time of the volition, is uncertain; and neither necessity nor certainty can be predicated of it. If, on the contrary, there is no uncertainty about the volition, regarded as an objective fact, the certainty must be due to a necessary connection between the volition and the circumstances, motives, or influences which lead to it This does not necessarily imply that the omniscient God is ignorant of future volitions of men, even if they are regarded as contingent and unnecessitated events. Many indeed do hold that even divine foreknowledge would be impossible in such a case. We can only say respecting the matter that, though we cannot from our own experience understand how there can be any foreknowledge of contingent events, we have no sufficient ground for denying that the Divine Being may have it. But we are now dealing with a theory which maintains that God himself creates the certainty of future volitions, while he does not create their necessity. And our conclusion must be that at the best this is only a verbal way of indicating that there is something unique in the causation of voluntary acts, while yet it is no solution of the mystery of the co-existence of divine predestination and human freedom.

Somewhat kindred with the foregoing theory is an attempt made by a prominent living writer [1]

[1] G. A. Gordon, *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 103.

to solve the problem. His object is to seek relief from the mystery of moral evil by resorting to the hope that, in the future life, in the case of all men, "the Divine persuasions must be finally availing." This is acknowledged to be a deterministic doctrine, though it is alleged that after all "determinism and freedom come near being but different sides of the same truth." [1] The hypothesis is essentially the same as the foregoing, only that the softer term "persuasion" is used of the divine influence, and a greater degree of power to resist that influence is alleged to exist in men during the present life. But that which ultimately determines human conduct is found not in the human will, but in the divine influence.

On the other hand, we find solutions attempted by giving more emphasis to the free volitions of men. Thus, one prominent Arminian divine [2] contends that the decrees of God have no relation to human actions at all. The divine plan, he says, "is a scheme embracing only the Divine Actions." But inasmuch as this seems to shut God out of all relation to human history, the author undertakes to tell how it is that after all God is able to have something to do with it. Adopting the extremest doctrine of creationism, he says that God "bestows the individual personal human spirit upon each human body pro-

[1] G. A. Gordon, *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 99.
[2] Whedon, *The Freedom of the Will*, pp. 293 *ff.*

created: he furnishes, in whatever measure he pleases, the power and abundance respectively of intellectual, volitional, and emotional nature," and also frames the body, giving it such qualities as he pleases. Furthermore, it is said, God "*locates* the individual in the system of men and things," assigning him his existence in whatever country, parentage and family, rank, or time he pleases. Again, we are told, God, "without touching our moral nature, at any rate for the worse," may for the time being strengthen or weaken our faculties, or even "suggest ideas not of unholy nature, but of a good, or of an unethical, quality." So far God's part in human history consists mostly in furnishing the materials of it. He is responsible for the beginning of each human soul, and determines into what body it shall be put. He makes men geniuses or idiots, as he pleases, but he has no power or will to determine human character and conduct.

This, however, seems to shut God out of all effective connection with the course of things in the life of men. Hence one more effort is made to vindicate for him some part in the determination of the events of human history. God is assumed to be able to foresee what men will do; and now we are told that "more or less resulting from these [previously mentioned divine agencies], arise juxtapositions and correlations by which divine ends are most easily secured in the natural

course of events." In illustration of this it is said: "Before a powerful and ambitious prince, as Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he has given birth in the royal family of Babylon, and placed upon the throne, God spreads the guilty land of Israel. Voluntarily and unmoved of God, with full power of doing otherwise, the wicked prince ravages the land as a beast of prey. The *end* of God, the punishment of Israel, the monarch thus without divine decree, temptation, influence, participation, or sanction, accomplishes." In this way it may seem at first blush as if God could manage to get his finger, so to speak, a little way into the course of human events. But unfortunately the author has for the moment forgotten his own doctrine. When he speaks of God's *spreading* Israel before Nebuchadnezzar, it sounds as if it were meant that God in some way *determined* the place of Israel's abode. But inasmuch as, according to his doctrine of free agency, the Israelites must have gone *freely* to the land of Canaan, God could have had no hand in placing them there. And equally true must it be, according to the same doctrine, that the ancestors of Nebuchadnezzar acted freely, without any divine decree, temptation, influence, participation, or sanction, in settling where they did. This juxtaposition of the two nations, therefore, cannot be said to have been arranged by God in any proper sense at all. And so, if the Babylonians gave to

Israel a needed chastisement, it can at the most, on the theory in question, only be said that this was agreeable to the divine feelings, but not that, in administering the chastisement, they were executing a divine plan.[1]

It is obvious that, according to this extreme and one-sided doctrine of human liberty, God becomes reduced, so far as human doings are concerned, to the rôle of an interested observer. He can see, and even foresee, what takes place; but he is powerless to shape the course of events. If this is true of the theory which concedes to God the ability to foreknow the actions of free moral agents, still more must it hold of the theory which denies to God that ability. Yet those who adopt it try to persuade themselves that somehow God can exercise a genuine sovereignty over human affairs, fettered though he is with this absolute ignorance of what men are going to do. Thus Rothe [2] says:

> However capriciously the play of self-determining causes in the world of creatures may be, yet God (to whom nothing that takes place can be unexpected or surprising [though not foreknown]) penetrates at every moment with his all-seeing knowledge every part of the turmoil, which is not too confused for

[1] The same difficulty is to be found with Dr. Whedon's other illustrations.

[2] *Theologische Ethik*, 2d ed., pp. 211 *ff.* Similarly, Martensen, *Dogmatik*, § 116.

him, takes in the relation of it to his universal aim and to the plan of his government of the world, at every moment, with the unerringly sure glance of his wisdom, and has it at every moment in all points in the unlimited control of his omnipotence, so that he can irresistibly turn and mould it in such a way as is required in every case, in order to the accomplishment of his immutable purpose.

Now however well this may sound, it needs but a very brief consideration to see that it is little more than sound. What is this plan which God is supposed to have for the world? It is undoubtedly conceived to relate chiefly to these very beings whose volitions are declared to be entirely unforeseen by God, and therefore cannot be included in the divine plan. As soon as they act, God sees what they have done. But how can he turn and mould their actions so as to make them accomplish his purposes? He cannot use human conduct for this end; for he can never know what any one is going to do. There is left to him only his control of the world of inanimate and irrational nature. But here God is generally assumed to work according to a uniform and consistent method. Natural forces follow fixed laws. It is as good as inconceivable that God should be constantly interfering with these laws in order, by such interference, to work upon the course of things in the world of human action. It would involve a constant series of miracles, or

rather a complete abandonment of all method and regularity in the physical world, for the sake of regulating and rectifying the caprice and wickedness of men in the moral world. And even if we make such a violent and grotesque supposition, it is still impossible to see how God after all gains his end. So long as human volitions are utterly unforeseen and incalculable for him, how does he know what effect any upheavals and dislodgements of natural forces will have upon them? Just as soon as we pass from the general proposition, and undertake to find out what it really means, we find that it means nothing that can be rationally conceived. With the abandonment of a belief in the divine foreknowledge of human actions must be conjoined an abandonment of the belief in the divine sovereignty, so far as human history is concerned. God can look on, and get constant additions to his knowledge of men; but he is made practically powerless to exercise any control over human conduct, or to bring it into the range of his plans.

Precisely the same theory has been more recently advanced by a distinguished philosopher,[1]

[1] Prof. William James in *The Dilemma of Determinism* (in *The Will to Believe*, etc.), p. 180 *f*. Prof. A. V. G. Allen (*Jonathan Edwards*, p. 291), while holding that God may be regarded as able to foreknow the free acts of man, yet adds, "Even if it were required to conceive the divine omniscience as self-limited in order to the free development of the creature, this does not make impossible the divine moral government.

still living, who compares God to an expert chess-player, who "cannot foresee exactly what any one actual move of his adversary may be. He knows, however, all the *possible* moves of the latter; and he knows in advance how to meet each of them by a move of his own which leads in the direction of victory." The obvious difficulty with such a comparison is that the chess-men to be moved by God are the very men whose movements he is undertaking to overrule, but who yet are assumed to be quite beyond his control. Not being able to foreknow what any man is going to do, he can make no use of human agency in shaping human history, and can depend only on miraculous interpositions in natural operations for this purpose. He might, for instance, manipulate electrical forces so that men who are living bad and injurious lives shall be killed by lightning; or he might also in some secret way cause the land of good men to bring forth more abundantly than that of bad men. But experience does not warrant the assumption that he does follow any such method; and the fact that the operation of

It then would become a feature of the world-process as God has ordered it, that the free will of man shall be the means through which the divine purpose is to be accomplished." But how any "purpose" is to be carried out through men whose actions cannot be foreseen, it is impossible to understand, unless the "purpose" is simply that men shall do as they please. Of course there would be left to God the purpose and power to punish sin after it is committed; but this is another matter.

natural forces in general must be assumed to be uniform makes it, according to our philosopher's theory, practically impossible for the divine chess-player to checkmate his human antagonists. It is almost absurd to assume, under such conditions, the reality of any genuine divine sovereignty.[1]

It appears, then, that the controversy over this old question is as far as ever from being ended. The very fact that, in the most earnest efforts to effect a reconciliation, the most opposite theories are still propounded, ought surely to be taken as an indication that there is an inherent difficulty, or even impossibility, encountered in the task attempted. And this, further, should be regarded as an indication that the truth cannot be all on one side, but that, even at the risk of apparent self-contradiction, we do best to accept and affirm both sides of the antithesis. This is

[1] Reference may here be made to Prof. G. H. Howison's discussion of the *Harmony of Determinism and Freedom* in his *Limits of Evolution*, etc. His solution issues in an assertion of a freedom which is pure *self*-determination (or, as he phrases it, "self-definition"). He goes so far as to say that, "if the souls of men are really free, they co-exist with God in the eternity which God inhabits; and in the governing total of their self-active being they are of the same nature as he" (p. 338). He posits the existence of God as a being who is morally perfect, the other eternal moral agents being liable to fall into sin. But he does not give any intimation that God has any sort of control over human action, or exercises any moral government over men. The problem before us is therefore not really touched.

a conclusion adopted and forcibly stated by Canon Mozley [1] as follows:

Had men perceived more clearly and really than they have done, their ignorance as human creatures, and the relation in which the human reason stands to the great truths involved in this question, they might have saved themselves the trouble of this whole controversy. They would have seen that this question cannot be determined absolutely, one way or the other; that it lies between two great contradictory truths, neither of which can be set aside, or made to give way to the other; two opposing tendencies of thought, inherent in the human mind, which go side by side, and are able to be held and maintained together, although thus opposite to each other, because they are only incipient, and not final and complete, truths;—the great truths, I mean, of the Divine Power on the one side, and man's free will, or his originality as an agent, on the other.

[1] *Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 305 *f.*

CHAPTER IV

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN FREEDOM. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

IF the problem of the relation of divine sovereignty to human freedom seems to be insoluble, when considered in its more general and abstract form, it certainly cannot be said to be less puzzling when the fact of human sin is considered as one of its elements. Rather, this only complicates the problem. If all moral agents had always been absolutely sinless, it is even questionable whether there ever would have been any serious controversy over the compatibility between divine sovereignty and moral freedom. If it were true that men cannot but be holy, that God so influences them that right-doing is a necessity to them, there would be, it would seem, little reason to complain, or to raise questions, about an arrangement so delightful in its practical working No; it is the fact of the wickedness, and the consequent wretchedness, of the world that constitutes the chief part of the mystery which invests the problem of freedom *versus* necessity. It is this which has inspired the most

of the efforts to find a solution of it. It is this which has always constituted the darkest and most inscrutable feature of the problem.

If, on the one hand, we could persuade ourselves that sin, so-called, is not really sin; or, on the other, that God has absolutely nothing to do in reference to the origin of any evil, we should be rid of the most serious part of the puzzle that confronts those who try to justify the ways of God to men. But neither of these propositions will ever commend itself to the great majority of Christian men. And even if *moral* evil could somehow be disconnected from the divine agency, there would still remain the problem, why so many, and so unequal, burdens of physical evil and suffering are inflicted on the human race. The fact, however, remains: sin is guilt; and if it were not that, it would be at least an enormous misfortune, and one for which God could hardly be shown not to be somehow responsible. In general, the coexistence of a perfectly good God with a universe cursed with evil is the problem of the centuries, unsolved, and, so far as yet appears, insoluble. Theories and theodicies in abundance have been advanced; but if the authors of them have even satisfied their own minds, they have brought substantial relief to few others. Christians in general have to content themselves with a more or less blind faith in the goodness and omnipotence of God; while men like John Stuart

Mill, who have not been educated into any religious prepossessions, find from the light of nature but scant evidence of divine benevolence, and none of divine omnipotence.[1]

The problem is essentially the same as the one already considered; but it appears here in a more acute form. If in reference to voluntary action, when relating to matters of moral indifference, it was deemed necessary to insist on man's power of alternative choice, still more does this need to be insisted on when man's choice is a sinful one. On the other hand, determinists, who are ready to attribute to God the responsibility for other kinds of volitions, often shrink from doing so when they come to deal with the problem of moral evil. And Christian theologians, even those who have most stoutly emphasized the sovereignty of God, have yet generally shrunk from imputing to him the direct and efficient causation of sin. The proposition, that God is the author of sin, has almost uniformly been rejected.

The prevalent doctrine has been that the actual condition of the human race is that of moral depravity, so that men, even if capable of freely choosing in matters indifferent, morally considered, are yet unable, of themselves, to exert holy choices. This state has often been described as that of the bondage of the will.

[1] J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion.*

But however strongly this bondage may be affirmed, it has been held that it is not the original condition of man, but is the result of Adam's fall. And this fall, it is asserted, was a perfectly free act: Adam had a power of contrary choice which none of his descendants have. The apparent hardship of being born into such a state of moral bondage—of inability to do right, and yet of condemnation for not doing right—is explained by saying that mankind is a unit, and that the first parent acted for the whole race. *He* had a fair trial; *he* might have stood the test of temptation; *he* was subject to no compulsion or necessity; in him the race had its probation; the race fell in him, and lost its aboriginal innocence and moral freedom.

This Augustinian doctrine has indeed been very largely modified in some branches of the Christian Church, and in some has been almost entirely abandoned. Especially has it been difficult to secure general assent to the tenet that all the race sinned freely in Adam, and is justly condemned therefor. But it has nevertheless generally been held that all men are born morally prone to evil, that all do actually sin, and that without special divine grace no one will, even if he can, repent and become an heir of salvation. It was natural and inevitable that men should revolt against the doctrine that the human race is treated as a *unit* in being corrupted by Adam's sin, when yet the

same theology taught that God deals with men as *individuals* in his decree of election and reprobation. But in revolting against this doctrine they have by no means cleared away the difficulties of the problem; in some respects these have been even increased. If the race *could* fairly be regarded and treated as a unit, and the first man as the representative of the whole, the question of God's sovereignty as related to man's free will would not be so very difficult to solve. But if men in general have no complicity with Adam's guilt, and yet in consequence of it are born with weakened faculties and a depraved moral nature, then in one respect at least the case is worse than according to the other theory; men are brought into the world crippled and disabled, yet for no fault of their own. If, notwithstanding this innate propensity to sin, the human will is declared to be free to choose holiness as well as sin, this declaration is mated with another—that the will is certain invariably to choose sin rather than holiness. Moreover, instead of a free choice of sin made once for all by our first parents in the full possession of their consciousness, and with a clear sense of what their action signified, we are now told of a first choice of sin in every individual, but at a time which can be fixed neither by the child himself nor by any observer—a time when self-consciousness and moral sense are just struggling into existence, and the moral agent can have no

true sense of the far-reaching significance of his conduct.

Different as these two views are, they coincide in this: that both the Augustinian and the Arminian recoil from affirming that God necessitates sin. Both declare that sin is the free act of the sinner. But this is done, on the part of the Augustinian, at some expense of logical consistency. Edwards, for example, argues [1] with great cogency that God's foreknowledge of human volitions implies their necessity. A future event whose occurrence is contingent, that is, uncertain, cannot, he says, be certainly foreknown. But since God does certainly foreknow everything, therefore, he concludes, "It is perfectly demonstrable that, if there be any infallible knowledge of future volitions, the event is *necessary;* or, in other words, that it is *impossible* but the event should come to pass." This must be as true of Adam's sin as of any other. Similar declarations are made over and over. It is hard to see how absolute determinism could be more strongly expressed. For all the conditions preceding and accompanying the volitions of men are determined by God. He created the world; he made man, giving him such a physical, intellectual, and moral nature as he chose to give; the motives, external and internal, by which men are moved to exercise choice are of divine appointment. Consequently,

[1] *Freedom of Will*, Part II., sect. xii.

if it is "impossible" but that men's volitions should be what they are, the impossibility seems clearly to come from divine causation. Edwards himself later virtually draws this inference, when he says [1] that "God permits sin, and at the same time so orders things in his providence that it certainly and infallibly will come to pass in consequence of his permission." Toplady puts the case still more strongly when he says, [2] "Surely if God had not willed the fall, he could, and no doubt would, have prevented it; but he did not prevent it; *ergo*, he willed it. And if he willed it, he certainly decreed it." Still more sweepingly does Luther [3] put the case, when he says that "we do nothing by virtue of a free will, but according as God has decreed and does by his infallible and immutable counsel and power."

Such doctrine manifestly denies all free will, considered as a genuine power of contrary choice, on the part of man. And an obvious inference would seem to be that human responsibility must be denied also. This inference, however, is not drawn by these theologians. It will be noticed that Edwards in the passage quoted speaks of God's *permission* of sin. And herein he is very generally followed by predestinarians. His own statement of the matter is this: "There is no

[1] Part IV., sect. ix.
[2] *Doctrine of Absolute Predestination*, ch. ii.
[3] *De servo arbitrio*, p. 206.

inconsistence in supposing that God may hate a thing as it is in itself, and considered simply as evil, and yet that it may be his will it should come to pass, considering all consequences." His doctrine is that, in God's mind, it is "best, all things considered, that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world"; and consequently, as he is "the all-wise Determiner of all events," "it must be agreeable to infinite Wisdom and Goodness to order that it should be." This is a pretty explicit statement that God determines that sin shall exist in the world, and that he makes good his determination by making sure that some persons shall sin. Nevertheless, though this certainly seems to be equivalent to making God the author of sin, we must in fairness place beside it his other statement, that—

> there is a great difference between God's being concerned thus, by his *permission*, in an event and act which, in the inherent subject and agent of it, is sin (though the event will certainly follow on his permission), and his being concerned in it by *producing* it and exerting the act of sin; or between his being the *orderer* of its certain existence by *not hindering* it, under certain circumstances, and his being the proper *actor* or *author* of it by a *positive agency* or *efficiency*.

Here, where Edwards is concerned to vindicate the divine holiness, his ethical and religious sense leads him to accord to men a real initiative in moral

action. God is represented as only determining, on the whole, not to interfere with men's agency so as to prevent their forming their own sinful volitions. But when he is engaged in overthrowing the Arminian doctrine of contingency, he does not hesitate to insist that all things future are *made certain* by an infallible necessity, though evidently that necessity comes from a constitution of things which depends entirely on the divine will and power.

Such an inconsistency is nothing to be wondered at. It is one which, in some form, is unavoidable in any treatment of this subject. The only complaint which can rightly be made against Edwards and his followers, is that they do not see and acknowledge that there is an antinomy in their doctrine. But others than extreme predestinarians make use of this idea of the divine *permission* in their theodicy. It is, therefore, worth while to consider precisely what is meant by it, and how much it serves to illumine the general topic.

First, what value has the doctrine of divine permission of sin, as propounded by predestinarians? According to their view all human action is determined by motives, and God determines what the motives shall be. And certainly it may very plausibly be held that God does determine the circumstances and influences that lead men to sin. The forces of nature, and everything that is called "environment," are a result of divine

arrangement. The constitution of man is of God's making. Whatever evil tendencies come from hereditary propensities are to be ascribed to a divine provision whereby the child is subjected to evil influences derived from his ancestors. In short, all internal and external forces impelling the human being to volition and action are traceable to divine institutions and provisions. In other words, God furnishes the conditions and motives which lead to sin. And we are told that the connection between cause and effect here is such that "it is *impossible* but the event should come to pass."—Now it is clear that under such circumstances "permission" is, to say the least, an exceedingly inapposite term by which to denote God's relation to the commission of sin. What God decrees and efficiently makes certain; what, all things considered, he deems it best to have in his moral system and brings about by such means as makes the opposite "impossible"; this surely is "permitted" only in the same sense in which the earth is permitted to revolve around the sun. The term is a gross misnomer, serving only to confuse and mislead. And when Edwards says, "there is no inconsistence in supposing that God may hate a thing as it is in itself, and considered simply as evil, and yet that it may be his will that it should come to pass," it must be replied that, according to his premises, there is a very serious inconsistence. The case, to put it

bluntly, is this: God thinks it on the whole best that there should be sin in the world. But sin is hateful, and God himself will not commit it; but he so constitutes and circumstances men that they will commit the sin which he wishes to have them commit; he makes the sin so certain that it cannot but be committed. And yet he hates the sin so intensely that he denounces and fearfully punishes the very men whom he has induced to do the evil thing which, on the whole, he wants them to do! Now when nevertheless God is pronounced to be perfectly sinless, seeing that he does not *himself* commit sin, but only makes others do it, one cannot but be reminded of Macbeth, who, after he has paid the murderers to assassinate Banquo, and then sees Banquo's ghost sitting in his own seat, exclaims,

> "Thou canst not say, I did it; never shake
> Thy gory locks at me."

But certainly it is not customary to exculpate Macbeth for the crime on the ground that he did not himself commit it, but only *permitted* it.

But, next, what shall we say of permissive decrees, as the term is used by Arminians—those who hold that the moral agent is independent of divine control in determining his volitions? In this case it amounts to saying that God decrees not to prevent what he is unable to prevent! But this is almost puerile. It is like a man's saying,

"I solemnly resolve not to arrest the revolution of the moon." "Permission" is as great a misnomer in this case as in the preceding, if not even a greater.

There is, however, a middle course possible between these two opposite hypotheses. It may be said, God does not directly decree sin, and he *can* prevent sin, but decrees not to do so; he deems it wisest and best to leave to men such a degree of freedom as incidentally involves moral evil rather than to interfere so far as to make sin impossible. This would be a case in regard to which the term "permission" might not improperly be used. But of course it stirs up the old, unanswerable question, "If God can prevent sin, why does he not?" The only answer is, no one can tell. One mystery is met by propounding another. And the difficulty is only increased when it is held that God has such a control over the moral conduct of men that by his special influences he delivers some men from the dominion of sin, while he leaves others without his saving grace to go on in the way to ruin. If he can prevent or cure sin in some, why does he not do it in all? We have here not only a mystery, but the appearance of great partiality or caprice. The best we can say is that the whole matter is inscrutable.

We get little, if any, relief by carrying the question back into eternity, and speculating as to how

the matter stood in God's mind when he determined to create a moral system. A moral system implies moral agency; moral agency implies moral freedom; moral freedom implies the possibility of sin; the possibility of sin implies the probability, if not even the certainty, of sin. Sin, therefore, it may be thought, is incidental to a moral system. God, in determining to bring such a system into existence, had to provide for this possibility, or even certainty, of sin in the world. In order to accomplish his ultimate purpose of securing a kingdom of virtuous beings, he may be obliged to open a door for the ingress of moral evil. Sin could be absolutely prevented by not creating moral beings at all; but if a moral system is to exist, sin is an incident of it. In this sense God may be said to permit sin without directly willing it.

Now respecting the various theodicies that have been propounded it can at the best be said that they are only guesses or hypotheses. Whoever starts out with the postulate that God is a perfectly good God will come to the conclusion that the universe is on the whole a good one, or, rather, the best possible, as Leibnitz argued; for why should God, if himself a perfectly good being, set up an inferior system, when he might have had a better? So far it is easy to go. But when one undertakes to show *how* this obviously wicked and wretched world is the best that an omnipotent

and holy Deity can bring into being, it is not too much to say that no one ever really satisfied himself, still less his readers. Even though one may not be ready to say dogmatically, with Schopenhauer, that the existing universe is the worst possible, or with von Hartmann, that it is much worse than none, still it is difficult or impossible for any one to see why, provided God is the holy and omnipotent One that he has been held to be, he could not have succeeded better than he has succeeded in originating and developing a race of moral beings.

It is unnecessary to examine in detail the various conjectures and theories that have been made in the attempt to justify the wisdom of God in bringing the human race into existence. Whether we assume that God made a race of free agents, not knowing beforehand what they would do; or made them, knowing what they would do, but unable to prevent their sinning; or made them, knowing what they would do, and able to prevent their sinning, though determined not to do so; or, finally, made them and determined beforehand what they should do;—in any case the awful mystery of sin remains an awful mystery. The doctrine of divine *permission*, even when the word is used in a legitimate way, fails to relieve the difficulty; for if sin is what we have been taught to regard it; if it is the abominable thing which God hates, then, if he *can* prevent it, no one has shown

why he ought not to do so. Such hypotheses, as that sin is a necessary means of the greatest good, or that the highest virtue requires an experience of sin as its precondition, or that sin is necessary in order to show forth the glory of the divine justice and holiness;—these are only desperate resorts, which issue in virtually making sin to be necessary, and therefore no sin, or else in making God to be unjust, in that he condemns and punishes the sin which yet he makes to be necessary to the highest well-being of his universe.

What shall we say then? We must say in the first place, that it is manifestly a hopeless task to try to evolve a theory which shall clear away the difficulties of the problem. But, in the next place, it must be said that, whatever the difficulties may be, we must maintain now, with reference to the special topic of sin, both of the same two fundamental truths that were emphasized in the previous chapter, viz., divine sovereignty and human freedom. The antithesis between them seems, no doubt, sharper than when they were only considered in a general way. But, on the other hand, it is very especially in reference to moral evil that both these doctrines need to be insisted on. The divine sovereignty includes of course God's control of inanimate and irrational nature; but it is to us of chief importance as related to the course of human history. And human history is a history of moral development,

stained all the way with human guilt. And the doctrine of human freedom, which might almost be dispensed with, if all men were ideally perfect in character, must necessarily be maintained with strenuousness, when we consider a world filled with moral agents who are condemned alike by God and their fellow-men for their misconduct. They cannot be rightly condemned, unless they are free, and able to do better.

What is involved in the truth of God's sovereignty? These two things at least: that God is the Maker of all things, and that he is the Ruler of all things. All nature and all moral beings are his creation and under his dominion. In creating the world God determined its constitution and its manner of working. He endowed the universe with its forces, and fixed the chain of causes by which it moves on in its course of development. So far as non-moral beings are concerned, there is no serious question, that God is in the strictest sense an absolute Sovereign, producing, determining, controlling everything. But he made the human race also, and in making it he gave to it certain definite characteristics, and put it under the controlling influence of causative forces. Philosophically considered, there is no less reason for assuming a strictly necessitating divine causation here than in the physical world. Nothing can take place here without a cause any more than in the realm of inanimate nature; and

the causes that lead to moral action are fixed by the divine constitution of things. Accordingly God's sovereignty is well described in the words put into the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 34, 35),

> His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

But if metaphysical considerations lead us to hold to the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God, religious considerations point equally in the same direction. It is the moral world in which we must suppose the Almighty to be especially interested. His eternal purposes even with reference to the material world are subordinate, as we must think, to his plans concerning the beings whom he has made in his own image. The feeling of the pious heart inclines the Christian to believe in a universal Providence—to see the divine will and agency in all the affairs of life. It is expressed in the language of a familiar hymn,

> " In each event of life how clear
> Thy ruling hand I see."

Nor does philosophical reflection tend to upset this doctrine of religious feeling. If the divine

government and control is not strictly universal, what is the limit? Attempts have been made to fix the limit. One of these maintains that God is in no sense responsible for any of the *evils* of the world. He, being perfectly good, cannot be the author of anything that is not good.[1] All dis-

[1] This notion is set forth in a very earnest and fervid way by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, in his little book *Does God Send Trouble?* The author calls his work an effort to distinguish between Christian truth and Christian tradition. He argues that neither Scripture nor right reason warrants the notion that God can be said to send sickness, death, or any other calamity. Human sin is held to be the source of all evil. The whole doctrine of the book rests on a purely hedonistic basis. The exegetical part of it is rather remarkable. *E. g.*, Job's language (Job. i. 21) is corrected (p.16) by making it read, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath *received* [!]; blessed be his name." He adds the comment: "Who could bless the Lord for taking away our beloved? But we can bless him that, since the sad and broken natural order of disease and death has conquered our beloved one, the Lord has *received* to his eternal Paradise the spirit we loved." He seems to forget that Job is speaking not only of his children, but of his oxen, asses, camels, and of his own bodily health. In what sense had God "received" these? Also he fails to notice Job's reply to his wife (ii. 10), "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" He says (pp. 35, 36), "Study every passage in the New Testament referring to God's chastisements, and you will not find one connected with physical calamities and sorrows." But evidently he has failed to study the case of Paul's "thorn in the flesh." He fails to notice what Jesus says about the death of Lazarus (John xi. 4). He fails also to show that any chastisements mentioned in the New Testament have to do with anything else than physical calamities and sorrows. His argument is that all physical evils come from human sin disturbing the operation of natural law.

cipline or chastisement, administered through disease, disappointment, loss, or any kind of physical or material calamity, is pronounced to be not in any sense God's work, but a consequence of human sin. There is no place, then, according to this view, for the grace of submission, of acquiescence in the divine will. Whenever anything disagreeable happens to us, we have only ourselves, or some other sinner, to blame for it; God has nothing to do with it.

This doctrine, presented as a relief to minds burdened with the problem of evil, is as shallow viewed from a philosophical, as it is unsatisfactory viewed from a religious, point of view. Who is to discriminate between what is "good" and what is "evil," and apportion the several parts to God on the one hand, and to human sin on the other? What is an evil to one man is often a good to another. The same shower which brings the blessing of fruitfulness to the fields may be calamitous to the unprotected traveler who is so

We read (p. 25): "There was no place for catastrophe; no occasion of suffering; no cause nor intention of death. . . . The order stands unchanged. No new laws; no changed laws; no unjust laws. The same order. The man within the order *changed*. And this accounts for all the physical and material sorrow, sickness, misery, poverty, bitterness, violence, death in the world." But does the author really think that human sin has so interfered with natural law as to produce the lightnings, tornadoes, earthquakes, and volcanoes by which so much "trouble" and "death" have been caused?

unfortunate as to be exposed to it. Does God send the shower to the husbandmen, and sin send it to the traveler? Moreover, what is for the present unwelcome and unpleasant often proves in the end to be a blessing. Shall the recipient at first curse sinners for his trouble, and afterwards bless God for the discipline? Everything is tested by the fickle and short-sighted judgment of men; and it is therefore certain that hardly any two men can agree as to what is good and bad in the experience through which they have to pass. Moreover, the ultimate standard applied is not ethical, but physical. Evil is measured by the standard of agreeableness. Happiness is made the *summum bonum;* and the business of God is assumed to be to confer it. Whatever happens, whether traceable directly to human agency or to the operation of material forces, has to be parceled out into two classes, and ascribed to divine or human agency, according as each man likes or dislikes it.

Religiously considered, the theory in question is no less objectionable. It may be designed by it to vindicate God's goodness against the view that attributes to him the production of trials and hardships. But in reality it takes away the greatest of religious consolations in its very effort to confer them. God is indeed called perfectly good—too good to do such things as we suffer from; but the result is that we are left to be the

sport and victims of forces which God is powerless to control. In the bearing of suffering and trouble we are deprived of the blessing of exercising a spirit of resignation to the divine will, and are left to the cold comfort of knowing that, in spite of all God can do, some sinner or some devil has disturbed our peace and happiness. If recourse is taken to the Scriptures, nothing but the most superficial and forced exegesis can find any such doctrine there. Human troubles are there called chastisements; and it is expressly said that "all chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous" (Heb. xii. 11); yet such grievous experience is just as expressly declared to come from the Lord who loves us (xii. 6). Moreover, reference is here especially made to the opposition rendered by wicked men to the Christians addressed in the epistle (ver. 3).

And this leads to the further remark, that not only evil in general is represented in the Bible as coming from God, as, for example, when he is made to say (Isa. xlv. 7), "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil" (*cf.* Amos iii. 6); but the wicked conduct of men is often spoken of as included in the divine purpose and as under divine direction. The punishment or discipline which God is so often described in the Old Testament as inflicting on the Jewish people is most frequently described as consisting in the visitations which came from their heathen

enemies, whose ravages themselves are denounced as iniquitous and destined ultimately to be divinely punished. This doctrine is explicitly stated in Isa. x. 5–11, where the Assyrians are called the rod of God's anger, sent by him against Israel, to tread them down like the mire in the streets, although they themselves are utterly unconscious of serving any such purpose. Just so the enemies of Solomon are described as directly stirred up by Jehovah. So Pharaoh is over and over said to have been hardened by the Lord. Joseph's brethren in selling him into Egypt are said to have been fulfilling a divine purpose (Gen. xlv. 5; l. 20). Shimei, David said, had been bidden by Jehovah to curse him (2 Sam. xvi. 11); and David himself is said to have been moved by God to number Israel, though afterwards rebuked for the act (2 Sam. xxiv. 1). The false prophets of Ahab, Micaiah declared, had been deceived by a lying spirit sent by Jehovah (1 K. xxii. 22). Ezekiel says, "If the prophet be deceived, I, Jehovah, have deceived that prophet" (xiv. 9). These are only a few illustrations of the Old Testament conception respecting the divine sovereignty. Nor can it be said that the New Testament presents a different view. No passage in the Old Testament is more explicit or sweeping than Paul's declaration (Rom. ix. 18), "So then he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth." Of a more specific

case he says, with the same explicitness (2 Thess. ii. 11), "God sendeth a working of error, that they should believe a lie." And John says, of the ten kings that warred against the Lamb, "God did put in their hearts to do his mind" (Rev. xvii. 17). Peter in his prayer (Acts iv. 28) says that Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, "were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass." It is remarkable with what utter unconsciousness of any moral or metaphysical difficulty the wickedness of men is described as the fulfilment of a divine purpose, as when Peter (Acts ii. 23) says to the people of Israel concerning Christ, "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." [1] A more general statement of the same conception (of human sin as included in the

[1] Dr. Whedon's attempt to explain this representation (*Freedom of the Will*, p. 299 *f.*) is hardly successful. God, he says, only decreed that Christ should lay down his life, not that he should be crucified. He had, therefore, only to put himself into the way of men wicked enough to kill him; and they killed him entirely without decree, sanction, or participation on God's part. Not to remark upon the somewhat odd conception, of Jesus' looking around to find some one wicked enough to kill him, it is sufficient to say that still Peter's language asserts that Christ's being "delivered up" was an object of divine decree, so that here at any rate a specific act of wickedness is said to occur as a fulfilment of God's purpose. Christ himself virtually affirms the same in Luke xxiv. 26, where he declares his sufferings to be necessary.

divine counsel) is made by Jesus himself when he says (Matt. xviii. 7), "Woe to the world because of occasions of stumbling; for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh." Here the *necessity* of sin is declared, yet punishment denounced against it.

Of course it is easy to allege that these are only rhetorical forms of expression, and do not necessarily mean that God in any true sense includes the sins of men in his purposes. No doubt, this explanation would suffice, if it could be proved that God is in no sense concerned in the causation of sin. But these Biblical representations are after all in perfect accord with the general feeling of pious men in regard to their personal experiences. The trials which beset them are very largely due to the wickedness of their fellow-men. Nevertheless the dictate of pious feeling is to regard them all as divine dispensations. It was with reference not only to the wind that smote the four corners of the house in which his children were feasting, but also to the ravages made by the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, that Job said, "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah," and said in reply to his complaining wife, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" It would be a weary and hopeless task to try to ascertain in every case whether our afflic-

tions come directly and wholly from God, or are due more or less to the fault of men. In the single matter of sickness and death, it is always possible to find the cause, to a greater or less extent, in the negligence or criminal fault of some persons. Conflagrations, explosions, railway collisions, and other disasters, of which we almost daily read, seldom or never occur when they cannot be traced to the want of conscientious care on the part of some one. And so in general. If we were required to divide our trials into two classes —those that are divinely inflicted, and those that have a human cause,—and exercise patience and submission only with reference to those which we could ascribe directly to God, we should have to spend all our energy in the search after the source of them, and then seldom be able to come to a sure conclusion, so that the divinely designed benefit of the chastisement would be missed entirely. Or perhaps it should rather be said that in the great majority of instances we should be pretty sure to find the cause in some culpable selfishness or dereliction of man; so that there would seldom be an occasion, in our troubles, of saying, "Thy will be done"; for we should have to decide that it is not the divine will at all that we should have the trouble. Finding the sole source of it to be the vulgar one of human iniquity, we should naturally decide that the proper attitude towards it is that of indignation towards the

guilty cause of it, or, at the best, the kind of submission enjoined in the proverb, "What can't be cured must be endured."

In this matter the impulse of the best religious feeling is after all the highest wisdom. If God is really the Sovereign and Moral Governor of the universe, he must have the disposal of the material with which he has to deal. Inasmuch as by far the larger part of the experiences and discipline by which men are trained and tried is determined by the agency of other men around them, then, if these things are so exclusively of human origin that they can in no sense be regarded as of divine appointment, they cannot be called God's means of instruction and chastisement; they cannot be regarded as a part of his dealing with us. Whether the influences exerted on us from without are good or bad, since they come mostly from human agency and human volition, they would, according to the notion in question, in no proper sense be attributable to God, and would have to be left out of account in our judgment of what God is doing in human history for the promotion of his kingdom. But this is not the manner in which divine sovereignty is usually regarded by Christian thinkers. They have much to say about God in history. They hold that he is at the helm, that he controls the course of human development, that he uses both the good and the evil that take place for the

furtherance of his plans. It is not enough to say that God can *overrule* the evil which is done in spite of his will. The overruling itself is effected for the most part through the agency of human conduct; but if God's only relation to human conduct is to let it take its own course, he cannot properly be said to use it in overruling evil and in making the wrath of man to praise him; he can only wait on human actions, being obliged, so far as human affairs are concerned, to play the part only of a benevolent spectator.

Unless, therefore, we make an assumption which virtually paralyzes the divine sovereignty, we must concede that in some true sense the evils of the universe, not excepting moral evil, are included among the "all things" which God "worketh according to the counsel of his will" (Eph. i. 11). It is not only the Scriptures that give this representation. It is one that is forced on us as an inevitable corollary of the postulate of a sovereign God; it is the verdict of our deepest religious feeling.

But this, some one will say, is extreme Calvinism. And Calvinism, we are often assured, is virtually dead and buried. What shall we say then? We must say that, by whatever name it is called, it is one side of a great truth. It is to be condemned only when it is combined with a rejection of the antithetic truth. When the doctrine of divine sovereignty is so held as to

obscure or deny the complementary doctrine of human freedom and responsibility, there is good reason for cherishing towards it a strong feeling of repugnance. A system which seems to represent God as an arbitrary Ruler, who makes men that are unable to exercise holy choices, and then condemns and punishes them for not exercising them, cannot permanently maintain itself before the bar of a sound moral sense. Not many ever did hold the system in this extreme one-sided form. And it is because the other side has more or less distinctly been recognized in the Calvinistic system that this type of Christian faith has exercised so wide a sway over the Christian Church. This recognition has, no doubt, been too scant and grudging. Freedom of the will has in some of these creeds been asserted, but defined as only a freedom to commit sin.[1] The Westminster Confession says that God has endued the will with a "natural liberty that is neither forced nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil." But it is at once added that, by the fall, man "hath wholly lost

[1] So the First and Second Helvetic Confessions, ch. ix. By the fall, it is said, "voluntas ex libera facta est voluntas serva. Nam servit peccato, non nolens, sed volens." The French Confession of 1559 is similar. So the Belgic and the Dort Symbols, and others. But even the Methodist Articles (American, but drawn up by John Wesley) assert that "we have no power to do good works . . . without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will."

all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto."

Now whatever may be the fact respecting the nature and extent of human depravity, there cannot be secured a general assent to the proposition, that God condemns men for an innate propensity to sin which they have no power to resist. There are puzzling questions enough relating to this matter. The fact of moral depravity cannot well be denied. But how far can the individual be held responsible for this inherited tendency to evil? Is there a real ability in every child to grow up without committing sin? If there is such ability, is it a natural endowment? or is it a supernatural gift? In the latter case, if the natural man is unable to do right, is the divine aid, which the Arminians regard as counterbalancing the natural inability, to be properly called "grace"? or is it rather an aid which is required by divine equity? Are the divine requirements always and everywhere the same, demanding perfect holiness in every man? or is the law relaxed, so as to adapt it to the capacity of those who are morally unable to rise at once to a state of moral perfection? These, and other such questions, thrust themselves on the mind of the theological inquirer; and it is well to consider

them. But it is well also to enter on the consideration of them with the modest assurance that the problem is a difficult one, and that grave differences of judgment are certain to result. They are largely speculative questions, the settlement of which is not essential to salvation, or to harmony of spirit among Christians. What we can and must agree in is, on the one hand, that all men are sinners, and, on the other, that the Judge of all the earth will do right; that, though all men are sinners, God has plans of love for all, and "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4); that guilt, in order to be really guilt, must result from a wilful resistance of one's better knowledge and impulses, and must be a free act; that God judges men according to what they have, not according to what they have not, punishing, if he must punish, the ignorant sinner with fewer stripes than the more enlightened one (Luke xii. 47, 48).

In short, we must maintain, side by side with the Calvinistic doctrine of divine sovereignty, the Arminian doctrine of human freedom. It cannot well be too strongly affirmed. It is asserted by the enlightened conscience. It is demanded by rectoral justice. It is implied in the Scriptural language in which men are denounced for their contumacy and disobedience, and are implored to turn from their evil ways. It has

always in the Church, in some form, held its place alongside the doctrine of divine sovereignty, and always will hold it. The two antithetic tenets must both be maintained together—reconciled, if possible, but maintained, whether reconciled or not. It is imperative that God's power, knowledge, and providence should be acknowledged as universal. Unless he has the control of all things, he cannot make all things work together for good to his children. When Christians look up to him in faith and supplication, they crave the help of a God who made the universe, and who is able not only to give good gifts to them that ask him, but is also able to make the wrath of man to praise him. Nothing short of an absolute Sovereign can satisfy the demands of the pious soul. But, on the other hand, it must be held that the sense of moral freedom is essential to a moral being; that it is implied in the consciousness of guilt; that it is the trait by which men are distinguished from the lower animals, and are most closely affiliated with the Divine Being himself.

If it be objected that these opposite doctrines cannot be reconciled; that, if moral agents are free, their actions cannot be foreordained by God; that the two propositions are contradictory, and cannot both be true;—then let it be repeated that the very fact of the persistent and apparently irreconcilable controversy between the advocates

of the two doctrines is itself an evidence that each party has right on its side, and that, even though the different views may seem to be absolutely incompatible with one another, the apparent contradiction will somehow, at some time, be removed, and the mystery that has been hid from ages and from generations will be solved.

Already the bitterness and sharpness of the conflict have been greatly assuaged. The contestants have come more nearly together even in the theoretical dispute. And, what is of still greater consequence, they are learning that the practical side of Christian faith is more important than the theoretical. They can agree in worshiping a God who, in whatever sense he may be said to include sin in his sovereign purposes, is yet of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on perverseness (Hab. i. 13); they can together confess their sinfulness, and trust for salvation in the saving grace of an all-loving God; they can enlist as fellow-soldiers in the campaign of their Master against the forces of the Prince of darkness; they can pray and work together for the coming of that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF ORIGINAL SIN

THE question concerning the origin of sin or of a sinful propensity has been more or less involved in the previous discussion of the relation of divine sovereignty to human responsibility. But this topic deserves a separate and more particular treatment. Here, as there, the antithesis of free will and divine agency plays an important part; but the problem is more especially one of human psychology.

Here again there are two extremes. The question is: Wherein consists human sinfulness? And in answer to it it is asserted, on the one hand, that it consists in an inborn inclination to moral evil; on the other, that it consists in the free, self-determined choice of the individual, self-conscious man.

The argument for the Arminian view is clear and simple, and has already been substantially given. Sin is declared to be obviously the act of a conscious moral being, committed voluntarily against a known law. A man, it is insisted, cannot be to blame for what he does uncon-

sciously or involuntarily, nor for violating a rule of which he is ignorant. These are principles recognized in human jurisprudence as fundamental. It is true that ignorance of the law is not always admitted as an exculpation; but this is partly because such ignorance may be falsely alleged, partly because it is assumed that the offender is to blame for not knowing the law. So in some cases a man may be held responsible for an unconscious act, as when a drunkard committing murder is not held to be innocent, even though unaware of what he is doing; since he is to blame for putting himself into a maniacal state. But this is very different from the case of one who is held to be guilty on account of an inborn temperament for which he is in no way responsible. What is called original sin is something inherited. It antedates all conscious choice. It is as unavoidable as the color of one's skin or the number of one's fingers. How can one be condemned as guilty on account of any physical or moral propensities which are strictly innate? That this cannot be, seems axiomatic and incontrovertible.

But there is another side. The question is not merely the old theological one concerning our responsibility for the sin of Adam. Even if we abandon entirely the traditional notion of the fall of our progenitors from a state of angelic dignity and purity, and take the narrative in Genesis to be simply parabolic or mythical, the problem of

hereditary sin remains essentially unchanged. For in any case heredity has more to do with one's immediate ancestors than with one's more remote ones. Dismissing, then, all theological and traditional prepossessions, let us contemplate some of the obvious elements of the problem which confronts us.

1. The fact of a propagated *tendency* to sin can hardly be denied. Not many ever have denied it. If a certain plant always produces a certain kind of flower, we assume that it has an inherent tendency to produce it. So if every human being sins, we infer that there is an inherent tendency to sin in the race. And this tendency is inborn. It manifests itself more decidedly in some than in others; but it is never absent in any man. This, I say, is generally conceded. But, it is often urged, a *tendency to sin* is not a *sinful tendency*. The inherited propensity *leads* to actual guilt, but is not itself culpable. Yet even when this is granted, the difficulties of the problem are not removed. For—

2. The voluntary choices which one makes after his moral nature is sufficiently mature for such choices, are nothing but the developed natural tendency of the child. What is called in the younger child a natural or innate *desire* or inclination, we call in an older one *will;* but will is nothing but desire more fully developed and more consciously exercised. In either case, however,

we regard a person's *character* as constituted by his *inclinations*. The young child is inclined to self-gratification; so the older child and the adult. What is the difference? Only that the older person is more conscious of his inclinations than the infant is. But this consciousness, it may be said, makes all the difference between the blind, irresponsible desires of the child and the responsible choices of the adult. This is plausible; but we must notice—

3. That it is impossible to fix any point at which the conscious, voluntary acts begin, as distinguished from the unconscious, involuntary state. No one's memory can ever recall the time when the supposed change took place. Theoretically considered, this change is a momentous one. It is the inauguration of personal, responsible existence. But no one—neither the child himself, nor any one watching his development—can ever detect the point at which this momentous transformation takes place. The instinctive desires pass insensibly into conscious choices. It is like the growth of the bud into the flower. We find it convenient to have the two terms by which to distinguish the immature from the mature; but there is no point at which it can be said with scientific precision that here the bud ends, and the flower begins. So with moral development. All that we see or remember indicates simply a gradual transition from the state of unconscious

impulses to that of conscious self-determination. Even in the adult perhaps the greater part of his inclinations never come distinctly before his consciousness. It is certainly quite incredible that the young child at any one moment of time suddenly finds himself exercising a volition which he clearly recognizes as something radically distinct from the passions and desires which he has been previously indulging. But more than this:

4. It is impossible to conceive of a moral agent in whom conscious moral action does not depend on pre-existing *tendencies* to moral action. There must be some *reason* for the first conscious moral choice; and that reason is found in the constitution which the child has inherited; otherwise we might expect to see young beasts suddenly transformed into moral agents. In order to the exercise of a conscious volition there must be a real *person*, endowed with an intellectual and moral nature—with self-consciousness and a will. Moral action must have a basis—something to start from. The will is nothing but a moral being willing. There must be a moral being before there can be a moral choice. How can a *non-moral* being put forth a *moral* choice which transforms him into a moral person? The alleged beginning of moral action thus presupposes after all the existence of a moral personality in the infant. This person must be *some kind* of a person; and the kind is determined by the condi-

tions and influences that have moulded the child during his unconscious and irresponsible state. Now if these hereditary influences have begotten a tendency to evil, how can the first conscious volition be other than a conscious ratification and repetition of the preceding tendency? The innate tendencies make the person what he is; how can he be expected to resist and overcome these tendencies? It is indeed possible to affirm that, as soon as the child attains the possession of a conscience and a will, he *can* resist his inborn propensity to evil; but no one really thinks that such resistance is in fact ever made; no one sees how it can be made. The affirmation that a child just emerging into a vague sense of right and wrong is able to stem the whole current of his innate impulses, sounds almost more like a jest than like a serious proposition. The assertion of such a possibility sounds much like an assertion that at any time our moon may cease her monthly revolutions around the earth, and start off on a pilgrimage to the planet Jupiter.

These considerations serve to show that the doctrine of original sin has a very solid foundation in the facts of human nature. There is in every human being a hereditary tendency to sin—a tendency which is preponderant and apparently irresistible. This tendency is the antecedent and cause of the sinfulness which characterizes the conscious and mature man. The transition from

the native propensity to the consciously sinful volition is imperceptible; it is like the growth of the seed into the tree. Here, no doubt, is a great mystery. The unconscious, irresponsible infant becomes a self-conscious, responsible man. *When* is the transition made? It is as impossible to answer this question as to tell when the seed becomes a tree. The origin of personality is hidden among the clouds that obscure our knowledge of infantile development. Nor does imagination or speculation render us any substantial help in the attempt to conceive when or how the change takes place. The radical and enormous difference which we cannot but posit between a responsible moral being and an irresponsible animal being, makes one naturally desire to see that difference everywhere. But the new-born infant is, morally considered, but an irresponsible animal; and yet it is always out of this irresponsible creature that the responsible man has to be evolved, and evolved by a process so gradual that the transition from the one to the other is absolutely imperceptible. Neither of the antithetic schools of theology can throw any satisfactory light on the problem. The Arminian, laying stress on individual responsibility, can only say that, though untraceable, a tremendous change must somewhere occur in the child's spiritual growth. The Augustinian can only say that, as there is no traceable revolution in the child's

development, we must assume that the germ of the man is in the child, morally as well as physically. The best we can do is to admit that there seems to be an element of truth on each side, while neither clears up the obscurity that rests on the problem.

The Augustinian, in his effort to remove all the difficulty, tells us that the race is a unit, and that all the individuals are only phases and developments of the genus. The first man, the federal head, was free from original propensity to sin, but fell into sin freely, and so corrupted the whole race. As parts of the race of which he was the root, we inherit and share the guilt and corruption of that act of disobedience. This explanation labors not only under the difficulty that no individual can sincerely believe and feel himself to be guilty of a sin committed by another man thousands of years ago, but also under the further difficulty that, if there is such an intimate connection between the progenitor and the race as this theory supposes, then it is unreasonable that in the treatment of the individual descendants of Adam any distinction should be made in the divine government. But the same Augustinian doctrine which asserts the absolute oneness of the race in its sin teaches that men are treated separately in the divine government, some being chosen out from the mass to be regenerated and saved, while others are left to be punished for

their sins. Each man being treated as an individual responsible for his own sins, it is little relief to be told that Adam at least had a fair trial and full freedom, and might have stood the test to which he was subjected. If, having no evil propensity, and able to stand the test, he yet failed to do so, how, one may well ask, should that make me satisfied to be subjected to a test which I *cannot* stand?

Scarcely more satisfactory is the solution offered by the Arminian and the Semi-pelagian. They admit the innate propensity to sin, but content themselves with affirming that a tendency to sin cannot be called itself *sinful*. The depravity is acknowledged to be real; but it is not conceded to be a *culpable* depravity. Actual guilt, they say, comes only when a person contracts it by actual, voluntary sin. The inherited depravity, it is said, *leads* to actual sin, but is itself without any moral quality. This explanation, however, obvious as it is, fails to solve the puzzle. A tendency which is so universal and so strong that it brings every man into a condition of actual sinfulness must, one would say, be itself sinful; or, if not, then it must mitigate, or even neutralize, the guilt of men's actual sins. A depravity which we are not responsible for, if it *causes* us to sin, must, it may fairly be urged, be just that which *excuses* our sin. And the logical conclusion seems to be, either that men are really not sinners at all,

or else that all actual sin is entirely independent of the so-called native depravity, and is an absolutely free, spontaneous product of the individual will. But neither of these conclusions can be accepted as true to fact; and therefore the solution is one that fails to solve.

Yet each of these attempts to clear up the problem of the origin of sin contains an important element of truth. It is only when each one in a one-sided way tries to exclude the other, that the failure to explain the difficulty becomes obvious. Theories must recognize facts; and there are facts in human experience and human consciousness which warrant both these antithetic conceptions of the problem of moral evil. No theory can be satisfactory which overlooks, or insufficiently recognizes, one whole side of the phenomena that are to be explained. It is true, on the one hand, that men have an ineradicable conviction that there can be no genuine guilt except where there has been free conscious choice. But it is also true, on the other hand, that in the practical religious life the most earnest man feels more disposed to humble himself on account of his *general propensity* to sin than on account of certain particular acts of sin which are distinct in his memory. What he contends against is the underlying tendency to selfishness and worldliness which wars against his better aspirations. He does not nicely distinguish between propensities

which are inborn and those which he has brought on by his voluntary transgressions. He cannot make such a distinction. The tendency which was inborn continues still; and if it has been strengthened by conscious indulgence of it, it is the complete whole which he has to resist and overcome. Moreover, there is such a thing as a race-feeling in men, which makes them in some sense assume each other's guilt. We are members one of another. So closely are men's lives intertwined that the character and conduct of each are dependent on the others. We mould one another; and the evil that breaks out in a community is in a certain real sense the fault of the social body as well as of the individual criminal. This principle is recognized in certain acts of legislation which put the responsibility and penalty of some offenses upon the whole community in the midst of which they are committed. It is illustrated in prayers like those of Ezra (Ezra ix.) and Daniel (Dan. ix.), in which the supplicant associates himself with all his countrymen, both living and dead, in the confession of national sins, as if himself guilty of the whole.

In short, when the question of human sinfulness is investigated, we find that it is a two-sided question, the one side or the other becoming prominent according as man is considered in the character of a distinct individual, or in the character of a member of society. Neither side

can be disregarded; but in trying to include both in our examination we run into difficulties and seeming contradictions. These contradictions, we may confidently presume, are not absolute and irreconcilable; but it must be confessed that the reconciliation has not yet been discovered. Meantime our part is to admit the facts on both sides, adjust them to one another as best we can, and hope for that perfect adjustment which thus far has not been attained.

Before dismissing this topic, however, there should be considered the question, what bearing the well-established doctrine of *evolution* has upon the problem of original sin. Some think that it throws important light upon it, or even furnishes a solution. Man, according to this doctrine, is the product of a long process through which inferior animals gradually became men. But the first stages of humanity must have been characterized by a very low state of moral development. The animal passions and appetites were dominant; and the first moral work was to overcome these, and to rise into something like an altruistic sense. The inherited depravity, if such it can be called, was simply these animal propensities, which were normal in the beast, but need in man to be overcome and to be replaced by the supremacy of the higher nature. It being a necessary part of the divine plan that man

should come into being in this evolutionary way, it was inevitable that he should bring with him these lower, animal characteristics; and the overcoming of them is necessarily a long and slow process.

This view of original sin, though differing from the traditional one, can hardly be regarded as affording any material relief from the difficulties in question. It retains, in a somewhat emphasized form, the element of the inheritance of evil tendencies. It represents these tendencies, however, as necessary, and not guilty. It is commonly supposed to be inconsistent with the notion of a fall of man, and to show rather that the whole history of the race is one of ascent, not of depravation. Sin, in the full and proper sense of the word, is thus made, not the beginning, but a later phase, of the evolutionary process. A free will and a moral sense had to be developed before there could be any sin; and the extreme evolutionist even holds such a doctrine of necessity that no moral guilt is possible at all. In the latter case the problem before us is solved by cutting the knot—by removing the one factor which makes the whole difficulty. Theistic evolutionists, however, who admit the reality of sin, have to admit also its universality; and so the problem remains, how, in the wise and benevolent providence of God, a race of morally responsible beings should have come into existence every one

of whom fails to be what God wills him to be. The kernel of the difficulty is essentially the same as it was when sin was traced to the fall of Adam and a consequent depravity of human nature. Indeed in some respects the evolutionary theory of sin complicates, instead of solving, the problem.

The two most characteristic features of the evolutionary doctrine of sin are (1) the conception of man as having risen rather than fallen; and (2) the conception of sin as consisting in the dominance of the animal over the spiritual nature. To speak of the latter point first, it must be said that this definition of sin has no appreciable advantage over that which has been current heretofore. Indeed it may be insisted that, in so far as it is new, it differs for the worse. Its novelty, however, consists chiefly in a new phraseology which differs from the traditional one in form rather than in substance. There is essential agreement between the evolutionist and the great majority of all Christian theologians on the point that human beings come into existence with depraved tendencies, resulting in all cases in actual moral imperfection. He agrees also with the majority of theologians of the present day in holding that the *tendency* to sin cannot properly be called *actual* sin, or guilt. It makes no practical difference with the nature of the depravity, whether it is ascribed to an inheritance from a fallen human progenitor who was at first holy, or to an inherit-

ance from an animal that never was, and never could be, holy. In either case the upshot is the same—a guilty character growing out of evil, but not guilty, propensities. So far as *sin* is concerned, it is in both cases regarded as the moral state of a personal being, willing, acting, and feeling otherwise than he ought.

But it seems to be thought by many that it is an important gain to look on sin as the outworking or survival of *animal* characteristics, and to define duty as the moral obligation to overcome the inherited animal propensities. But it is not apparent how this at all clarifies the conception of sin or of duty. It is true that there are human traits which are closely allied to certain bestial traits—especially the selfish impulse to strive to get what one wants for himself. The desire to obtain food, and to be protected against the discomforts and dangers that come from unfriendly natural forces, is instinctive both in man and beast. And when one is obstructed or balked in his pursuit of such physical good, there is awakened a spirit of hostility and anger against the animal or person that stands in his way. Directly springing from this instinct for self-preservation arises in the beast a desire for power —for the ability to resist and overcome his companions and rivals in the search for physical supplies and comforts. This, too, has its counterpart in mankind. But when we have said this, we

have substantially exhausted the catalogue of the animal traits which, as moral beings, we are under obligation to contend against.

How unsatisfactory this is, as an elucidation of the nature of sin, is seen from three considerations: (*a*) The animal impulses which we are enjoined to overcome in ourselves are not sins at all in the beast. They are impulses with which he is endowed, and for which, however unlovely they may often appear, no one regards the beast as morally responsible. The case, as thus conceived, is almost precisely identical with the conception of human depravity which has been dominant for a long time. Certain passions and impulses which are inborn in the child, and which in him are regarded as not sinful, are called sinful when consciously indulged by the more mature individual in whom the moral sense has been awakened. The new-born child, so far as morality is concerned, is practically only an animal. Its desires and emotions have mostly to do with the physical nature. They are at first purely instinctive, and morally innocent. That great transformation by which the non-moral infant becomes a morally responsible person is equally momentous and mysterious, whether the antecedent state is called animal or merely infantile.

(*b*) It is inaccurate to identify *sinful* propensities with *animal* propensities in the sweeping manner in which this is often done. The beasts

exhibit not only unlovely, but very amiable, traits. If some of them are ferocious, others are gentle and harmless. If some are sly and treacherous, others are in a high degree trustful and faithful. In short, in deciding what traits the child should be enjoined to foster or to suppress, we cannot indiscriminately condemn all the instincts and impulses that are observed in all animals; we must discriminate between the commendable and the condemnable ones. The line between right and wrong desires and motives is not the line between the animal and the non-animal; it is simply the line between the right and the wrong; and the assumption that the human race is descended from the brute throws absolutely no light on the problem of the nature of sin and moral responsibility.

(*c*) The sins of mankind are very largely such as have no prototype in the natural disposition and conduct of brutes. For example, pride—pride of nationality, of rank, of family, of wealth; the disposition to look with contempt upon so-called inferiors, and those less favorably situated than one's self;—this crying sin of men cannot be traced to any inheritance from the lower animals. And then the love of money—that root of all kinds of evil—whose corrupting and degrading influence on human life and character has always been such a doleful feature of human nature,—this can in no sense be called an heirloom from our

animal progenitors. We find in our brothers, the brutes, no trace of this overmastering passion. Just as little do they present any example of a life devoted to the pursuit of mere pleasure—a pursuit in which so many thousands of human beings dwarf their faculties, and drag themselves down to intellectual and moral ruin. And when we consider those vices of sensual indulgence which are commonly called bestial, the melancholy fact is that they are exclusively human. They have to do, it is true, with animal, or physical, appetites, but the animal nature is in itself a good thing. It has normal cravings which need to be gratified. The better the body is treated, the better it is for the whole man. The vices which are called bestial are simply *normal* appetites *abused*. Certain passions are indulged excessively. Unnatural appetites are created. Real brutes, however, do not thus abuse the body. We do them gross injustice when we talk about men making brutes of themselves. Brutes, left to themselves, never get drunk or kill themselves by sensual indulgence. It is not a sin to cultivate the bodily powers, and let the natural affections and impulses have free play. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the animal nature dominating the spiritual. One may indeed devote himself to the body excessively, in either of two ways: by an over-indulgence of certain appetites till they become abnormal, demanding more and

more satisfaction; or by an inordinate attention to physical culture for a bad end. The prize-fighter, for example, may do the very best that can be done by way of developing his bodily powers; but he does it for the base purpose of being able the more skilfully and severely to pound his antagonist. In either case, whether a man creates and indulges unnatural and excessive appetites, or devotes himself to physical culture for an unworthy end, the fault is not in the *body*, but in the *mind*. It is not that the lower, or animal, nature rules over the higher nature; but that the higher nature makes a bad use of the lower.

And likewise when an effort is made to subdue the body by asceticism, the moral contest is not a contest between the higher and the lower nature. One may buffet the animal impulses ever so fiercely; one may scourge or starve one's self almost to death,—and yet be a great sinner while doing so. A narrow formalism and self-righteousness may be the dominant motive and the ultimate result of the struggle. Or, if we take the case which is more common—that of men who neither particularly abuse the body by over-indulgence, nor cultivate it for sinful ends, nor castigate it as an unworthy part of one's being—men who yet spend nearly all their thoughts and energies on the means and methods of getting food to eat and clothes to wear—what shall we

say of them? The lower nature, so-called, may seem to dominate. The demands of the body seem to determine the whole course and use of the spiritual nature. This is the experience of the greater part of mankind. As things are, it must be so. But there is no wrong in one's thus working to satisfy the cravings of the sensuous nature. It is rather one's duty to do so. There may of course be narrowness, selfishness, envy, and malice connected with a life of poverty and toil; but these vices may flourish quite as well where there is wealth and comfort.

It may be said, however, that the higher nature is not the intellectual, but the moral, and that it must be made to rule over the lower nature. But what does that mean? The monk who flagellates himself, and tries by extreme maceration to subdue the body, does not thereby necessarily get any real good. His moral nature may have got the better of his body; but it has not got the better of itself. No doubt, the moral sense of man is in truth the higher part of human nature. But it is a singular misrepresentation of fact to say that its proper business is to fight against the rest of human nature. On the contrary, it is just this other part of human nature—the intellect and the body—that is, as a rule, in a *more normal state than the conscience and the will*, which constitute the moral nature. The real conflict is not between the moral and the physical,

but between the moral and the immoral. What is needed is that the abnormal moral state should become normal. The right must dominate. Charity must prevail over distrust; kindness over malice. The conflict is not between the conscience and the body, but between conscience and unconscientiousness. The problem is not how the moral nature is to *overcome* the intellect or the body, but how it is to *use* them.

What has just been said prepares the way for a correct judgment on the other feature of the evolutionary doctrine of sin—the allegation that there has been no fall, but only an ascent in the moral history of man. Granting all that has been scientifically established, or made probable, as to the derivation of human beings from the lower races,[1] when we come to the moral sense, we come to a radically new thing, on whose origin and development no palæontological research

[1] The more recent researches of geology and archæology tend to show, on the one hand, that the former assumption of evolutionists—that the human race must have been hundreds of thousands of years on this globe—is destitute of evidence, there being no indications that the race has existed much, if any, more than 10,000 years; and, on the other hand, that a high state of civilization is found to have existed in some countries at least 5000 or 6000 years ago. This disproves the assumption that the evolution of mankind has been an exceedingly long and slow process—also the assumption that it has been a steady and uninterrupted process. Degeneration, as well as progress, has been a feature of human history.

can throw any light. Before the evolution of man the various types of animals were normal types. The lion was, and is, what the lion was designed to be. And so with all. We may call the rhinoceros ugly, and the fox tricky; but we do not regard these traits as wicked. Man alone is conspicuously the race that is not what it ought to be. Considered as a species of animal in which, to the ordinary gifts of intelligence and sagacity, as the higher animals possess them, there has been superadded a moral and religious faculty, man presents the anomaly of being the one race which fails to fulfil its ideal. That which is his most distinguishing characteristic is out of order. Nothing of this sort is alleged concerning any of the other products of evolution. No one ever thinks of saying that the elephants are not normal elephants, or that the eagle ought to be a different kind of bird, or that the whales are not what whales were intended to be. But the best of men condemn themselves; and as for the race in general, nothing is plainer than that it is decidedly not what it ought to be; it is not fulfilling its end.

Now this being the case, it is evident that evolutionary theories fail to explain the moral state of mankind. And therefore when we are confidently told that science has entirely disproved the old notion of the fall of man, and that the transition from brutehood to manhood was

simply an advance in the animal state, it must be replied that, on evolutionary principles themselves, the human race is an exception to all rules. Though man may be physically superior to the brutes, yet so far as his real self is concerned—the faculties which chiefly distinguish him from the brutes—he is in a disordered condition. It is as if a new machine had been invented, more ingenious and complicated than any previous one, but always out of order, and tending, the more it is used, to wear itself out instead of doing the work which it was designed for. So then, when the evolutionary origin of mankind is admitted, the fact of human sinfulness still remains absolutely unexplained. The origin of a moral sense is itself something which evolutionism does not account for.[1] Still less can it

[1] See Du Bois-Reymond, *Die Sieben Welträthsel.* This agnostic (if not even atheistic) writer forcibly maintains that moral freedom is a phenomenon, or conception, entirely inexplicable on scientific grounds. He says the same of the origin of consciousness. Le Conte (*Evolution*, pp. 311 *ff.*), however, contends that the intellectual and moral nature of man can as intelligibly be derived from the inferior forms of animal life as these from the still lower ones. But he admits something "like a birth" in the development. "We may imagine man to have emerged ever so gradually from animals; in this gradual development the moment he became conscious of self, the moment he turned his thoughts inward upon himself and on the mystery of his existence as separate from Nature, that moment marks the birth of humanity out of animality" (p. 323). He assumes that moral responsibility must have been included in that birth—a pretty large as-

account for the universal *abuse* of the moral sense. The postulate of a fall is just as much needed on the evolutionary hypothesis as on any other.[1] We must choose between a fall from a state of normal manhood in Adam, on the one hand, and the development of a new set of faculties which never worked normally at all, on the other hand. In either case we must posit some kind of failure—either a sort of collapse or disorder coming after the introduction of the distinctively human faculties at first working normally, or else the introduction of new faculties which worked abnormally from the beginning—a system which may, therefore, be said to have been "not deranged, but never arranged."

The doctrine of evolution has undoubtedly served to modify considerably the traditional conception of primeval man. The old notion of Adam as a super-angelic being, with intellectual and moral faculties in the highest state of perfection, had, even before the advent of Darwinianism, fallen largely into discredit. It was easy to see that the Biblical narrative of the creation

sumption; for self-consciousness by no means necessarily involves a moral sense. Later (pp. 369 *ff.*), when he considers the problem of sin, Le Conte comes to the conclusion that evil "is a necessary condition of all progress, and pre-eminently so of moral progress." This is an old solution, but hardly satisfactory.

[1] See this point cogently presented by Principal D. W. Simon in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1893.

and the fall gave no warrant for such an extravagant conception. It had also been remarked by many that the Bible in general lays much less stress on the significance of the transaction in the Garden of Eden than has been laid on it in the Christian creeds. It was seen, too, that the question, just how the human race came to be sinful, is after all less important than the question, how great the evil of sin is, and how it is to be got rid of. When, therefore, the theory was propounded, and apparently established, that the human race, instead of beginning from the highest point of attainment, really began at the lowest conceivable grade of humanity—being not "little less than God," but little more than the beast—it was seen that after all there was nothing in the Bible, or in the logic of theological systems, that made it impossible to accept this verdict of natural science, so far at least as it was simply a physiological problem. And also as to the intellectual and rational nature of man, considering the close connection between the physical and the mental features of men, and the similarity between the mental faculties of men and those of the higher brutes, it seems very plausible to regard the human mind as only a higher stage of that which had existed before in the pre-human species of animals. Yet even here there is some ground, especially in view of the human faculty of abstraction and generalization—all the faculties, in

short, which are dependent on the use of language, or, on the other hand, must have led to the origination of language,—for doubting whether the inauguration of this enormous progress from races without a language to the human race with a language, and with all that is involved in it, can be confidently asserted to have been nothing but a slow evolutionary growth. This gift of reason and of language is regarded by many evolutionists [1] as at least not readily to be adjusted to their theory.

But whatever may be the fact respecting other characteristics of human nature, the distinctive features of man's *moral* nature can certainly not be scientifically accounted for as a product of evolution. Those who deny the reality of free will and moral responsibility, and consequently do not regard sin as guilt,—they find no difficulty in conceiving man's moral nature as only the natural outcome of the psychical traits of the lower animals. But those who hold that the ethical nature of man is something entirely unique, that the normal ethical state of man is holiness, and that the human conscience is truthful when it accuses men of *guilt*,—they cannot see how such phenomena can be the product of evolution. Even if the moral sense itself could be explained as the efflorescence of certain bestial instincts, evolution does not explain the universal and persistent *perversion* of the moral sense.

[1] *E. g.*, Du Bois-Reymond, *l. c.*, p. 83.

The problem of original sin remains, therefore, unsolved. Evolutionism, in so far as it bears at all upon the question, favors the realism of Augustine rather than the individualism of Pelagius. It gives its verdict for traducianism rather than creationism. It accentuates the solidarity of the race and the universal working of heredity. In thus giving the weight of its influence to the side of Augustinianism rather than Arminianism, it works in a direction opposite to that in which theological thought seems to be predominantly inclining. And so it tends to keep the balance even between these two antithetic types of doctrine, and thus to perpetuate, rather than to end, the conflict. But it has to do chiefly with the origination, transmission, and modification of *physical* types of organic beings. So far as it goes beyond this province, it deals, though less confidently, with the question of animal instincts. But the problems of conscience, ethical ideals, moral responsibility, and moral evil are out of its province; and on the mystery of human depravity it throws no light at all.

We are therefore brought back again to the conclusion that there is no hope of solving the problem so long as the advocates of the opposite doctrines each insist on an unconditional surrender from the other. It must rather be maintained that, though opposite, they are not mutually contradictory, and that, though they

may *seem* to be contradictory, this appearance must be owing to the inherent difficulty and mystery of the subject. Consequently the combatants, as in the case of the great debate between Job and his companions, may wrangle indefinitely without coming to any common ground, so long as each aims to defeat the other. What is needed is that all should be led to make the confession to which Job was brought, after Jehovah had answered him from the whirlwind: "I have uttered that which I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not. . . . I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 3–6). The certain thing is that men are under sin, and need to be delivered from its power. How they came into this state; how far the responsibility of it must be ascribed to themselves, and how much to Divine Providence; why it is that all men are cursed with the evil taint, and whether any one ever could have kept himself pure from it;—these are questions which men may contend about forever, and "find no end, in wandering mazes lost." But whatever the solution of the speculative questions may be, the practical duty need not be obscure. Man may seem to be mysteriously enthralled by depraved impulses; but he may be sure that, by the help of divine grace, he can be liberated from the thralldom.

That is what men most urgently need to know. To do what in them lies to become reconciled to God, is that to which they need to be most strenuously exhorted. Comparatively few have any taste or capacity for metaphysical explorations of the mysteries of the ways of God, or of the moral history of man. Very few, however, are unable to understand the evil of sin and the need of being delivered from it.

CHAPTER VI

HUMAN AND DIVINE AGENCY IN REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION

THE fact of sin being assumed, there follows the need of deliverance from it and from its effects. "What shall I do to be saved?" is the natural cry of an awakened sinner. But the answers to this question vary, lying as they do at different points between two opposite extremes. Expressed briefly the extremes are these: On the one hand, it is said that the only deliverance from sin is cessation from sinning; and that this is the business of the sinner. In other words, sinners, if saved, must save themselves. On the other hand, it is affirmed that salvation comes wholly from God; that, in order to be saved, the sinner must repent and be forgiven, but that both repentance and forgiveness are a divine gift.

A change of character must of course be in some sense the act of the sinner. But when a man has become fixed in sinful habits, can he of himself overcome the propensities which draw him downward? Experience and observation testify that there are many men who say of themselves, and

of whom others would say, that they are incurably wedded to their evil ways. Habit is as real and powerful in the mental and moral world as in the physical. The inclination to selfishness, avarice, worldly ambition, or pride is like the appetite for drink. No mere resolution to abandon the vice will eradicate the appetite. If men are by birth so inclined to evil that they all invariably become sinners, and if therefore there seems to be a kind of necessity that they should sin, still more does it seem unavoidable that, when the native propensity is strengthened by sinful practice, the sinful habits should continue and become unconquerable.

Even without an inborn propensity to sin in men, there would still be the old question, how any one can act without a reason for acting. In other words, it is the question, whether there is such a thing as free self-determination even under the best conditions. But the discussion of this question need not be repeated here. Now, however, that the will of man is so heavily weighted with innate and self-increased depravity, the case is materially altered. And accordingly even Arminians generally admit that in order to a change of heart men need the gracious assistance of God.

Nevertheless, so far as one's self-consciousness is concerned, an act of repentance must be the act of the repentant man. Whatever influence may

be brought to bear on him by other men, or by the Spirit of God, the change in him must be a voluntary one; the volition must be his own. No one can repent for him; and no one can coerce him to repentance. Still when regeneration takes place, it takes place in consequence of influences of some sort that move upon the man's will. The origin of motives, however, is something that cannot be fully traced. The arguments, entreaties, and example of other men can be recognized and to some extent weighed. But what it is that turns the scale; what imperceptible forces may proceed from the divine mind to operate on the secret sources of voluntary action; what obscure or sub-conscious forces in the man's own nature may be wakened into life by certain outward or inward suggestions,—this can never be accurately traced by the man himself, and still less by any one else for him. It is, therefore, idle to contend over the question, just how the divine Spirit operates on men. One theologian insists that God can move the human heart only mediately, by the presentation of salutary truth; another insists that the influence must be immediate, without the use of truth,—a re-creating force working upon the soul below consciousness. But inasmuch as the method of God in his working on the minds of men is at best undiscoverable, it is surely profitless to dispute over so fine a point as this. In an important and true sense all influences that oper-

ate on the human will come from God, whether they are direct and unperceived, or those that consist in the effect produced on us by our human and mundane environment. But in a true sense also he who is moved to begin a new life begins it of his own accord; he is not conscious of being coerced into it; but rather he is conscious of acting freely. He cannot act without regard to the truth which he knows and the influences which surround him; he cannot help being moved by considerations addressed to his rational and moral nature. But he feels himself to be able to act freely in resisting or in following them.

In short, the same antithesis appears here as confronts us in general in the relation of human to divine agency. In one aspect the work seems all to be from God; in another, all from man. Yet the preponderant tendency of Christian feeling is to ascribe all the work of regeneration and sanctification to the sovereign grace of God. We see this tendency reflected especially in the hymns of the Church, as, for example, where it is said of the Holy Spirit,

> "And every virtue we possess,
> And every conquest won,
> And every thought of holiness,
> Are his alone."

Such language is not merely that of the extreme Calvinist. It is Wesley who sings,

"Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within."

And also,

"Carry on thy new creation,
Pure and holy may we be;
Let us see our whole salvation
Perfectly secured by thee."

And again,

"Lord, I am blind, be thou my sight;
Lord, I am weak, be thou my might:
A helper of the helpless be,
And let me find my all in thee."

It is especially a characteristic of the warmest effusions of Christian piety that the regenerate soul disclaims all personal merit. Whatever right emotions or good works manifest themselves in the new life are all reckoned as due to the free and unmerited grace of God; all sin, on the contrary, to the free and guilty choice of man. This is expressed in the familiar stanzas:

"Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own."

It is in the same tone that Paul speaks when he says: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

In precisely the same strain run the prayers of the saintliest men. They pray not only for external good, or the removal of external evils, but also for such blessings as faith, patience, love, zeal, submissiveness, and contentment. These are personal virtues, depending, if anything does, on a person's free volition. Yet the most ardent champion of the doctrine of free will may be found supplicating the Lord to give him these graces, which, according to his theory, he ought to obtain and cultivate for himself. Nay, more; men not only pray for such spiritual gifts, but they pray for the power to pray; they ask God to teach them what to pray for—to inspire them with the spirit of prayer. And for this too they have Scriptural warrant. For Paul says (Rom. viii. 26): "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us." It is thus made to appear that God is, as it

were, both the author and the answerer of prayer. Nothing could seem more effectually than this to involve a denial of the self-determination of the human being. For this utterance of the apostle is not made with reference to hardened and unregenerate sinners, who might be conceived to be the victims of a bondage of the will. It is made with reference to those to whom he has just said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption" (ver. 15). All through the regenerate life, therefore, the Christian is represented as dependent on divine favor for the ability to exercise the simplest and most primary functions of the Christian life. God is thus made emphatically to be all in all—the Giver not only of the gift, but of the desire for the gift, the supplicator as well as the supplicated; the human agent being made almost literally to answer to Jehovah's description as given by Jeremiah (xviii. 6), "Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand." One is even reminded of the words which Emerson puts into the mouth of Brahma,

> "They reckon ill who leave me out;
> When me they fly, I am the wings;
> I am the doubter and the doubt,
> And I the hymn the Brahmin sings."

The language of men when in a devotional frame

appears, then, to be of a decidedly deterministic tone. Only in the confession of sin is there a distinct intimation of personal responsibility; but even here the confessor beseeches God to give him power to turn from sin, thus implying his inability to forsake it, and therefore a bondage to it; but this, again, is a virtual affirmation of determinism. When addressing God men are little inclined to assert their freedom and ability. Even when they go to the very extreme of self-effacement in the expression of their relation to God, such an attitude is regarded, even by those who do not themselves go so far, as evidence of a most amiable and estimable type of piety. No one would now be disposed to bring a charge of dangerous heresy against the writer of the hymn which begins as follows:

> "I love my God, but with no love of mine,
> For I have none to give;
> I love my God, but all the love is thine,
> For by thy life I live."

Strong as this language is, it shocks no one who is sincerely pious. But it would be shocking, and seem quite on a par with the Pharisee's prayer, if one should declare that his love to God is all his own, and in no way and degree the product of divine influence. The Biblical conception is that God both begins and carries on the work of sanctification (Phil. i. 6); and such a disclaimer

of all dependence on him would sound like something little short of downright blasphemy. Yet if one looks at the matter in a cool, philosophic way, it may seem not unreasonable to hold that one's love to God, in order to be of any value, must be one's own love, and that an affection which is in such a sense produced in a man by divine agency that it may be called God's work alone, cannot in any proper sense be called the man's affection at all, and therefore can have no merit or excellence. Indeed, it might be maintained that there is a contradiction in the hymn: When the writer says, "*I* love my God," there is an affirmation of personal action which is inconsistent with the addition, "but with no love of mine"; how can one love except with his own love?

Shall we then attempt to mediate between the two extremes, and solve the problem by adopting the synergistic doctrine, that the work of sanctification is carried on jointly by God and man? There is a sense doubtless in which this is true. Yet it is after all not satisfactory simply to say that the divine and the human agency work together, as if both were doing the same kind of work and needed each other's assistance. The case has no analogy in human relations, where we speak of joint agency in the accomplishment of any work. In one sense the man must do the whole; the man must himself turn from sin,

exercise holy love, and do works meet for repentance. But in another sense God does the whole work; he gives man his faculties, and furnishes the stimulus and motives without which no volition is possible. Love to God must be a man's own work; we cannot say that God loves himself vicariously. On the other hand, all the incitements which lead one to exercise the love—whether they consist in the man's constitutional impulses, or in the persuasions of other men, or in the influence of providential events, or in the secret workings of the Holy Spirit—all these may be attributed to the execution of God's gracious purposes; and so the whole merit of the love may be ascribed to him. The prevailing impulse of the pious heart is to say, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

This dualism in the work of salvation is abundantly asserted and implied in the Bible. Men are urged to repent, as if everything depended on human volition: "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). But, on the other hand, it is said, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh" (Ezek. xi. 19). Just so in the New Testament human depravity is ascribed to the human will, as when Paul says of the heathen that, "knowing God, they glorified him not as

God, neither gave thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 21). And Christ began his ministry by the exhortation, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Here the moral corruption and the power to repent are both, implicitly at least, ascribed to man. But, on the other hand, it is as emphatically declared by our Lord, "No man can come unto me, except the Father that sent me draw him" (John vi. 44); and Paul says to his readers, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6). Here the work of sanctification is ascribed exclusively to God. And both sides of the antithesis are boldly joined together in the Apostle's familiar injunction, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

It is not necessary to multiply quotations and illustrations. Here, as in the relations previously considered, there confronts us this theoretical antinomy of divine sovereignty and human freedom. But here there is the peculiarity that the two theological parties almost seem to come together on the deterministic platform. Both the Calvinist and the Arminian affirm the sinner's need of divine help in order to deliverance from sin. They both confess their dependence on divine grace for the successful maintenance of the

new life which begins with regeneration. Practically they occupy the same position. And even theoretically they converge almost to the point of an identical belief. The moderate Calvinist agrees with the Arminian in asserting man's natural ability to repent and to do his duty, while they both assert also that this ability is never exercised. The more extreme Calvinist denies man's natural ability to do right; but even he holds that the sinner is somehow responsible for his sin. And all three unite in confessing that in point of fact the believer is saved by grace, that he is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. ii. 8, 10). The difference at the most seems to be reduced down to the question whether the sinner has power to *accept* the free grace of God, after the Holy Spirit has brought the offer before his heart. The predestinarian insists that the work is wholly God's; the libertarian, that the sinner, however strongly moved upon from above, must himself decide the question whether the offer of grace shall be accepted.[1] Both parties, however, would agree in setting before the sinner his guilt and his

[1] Some forty or fifty years ago, at a theological examination in Andover, one of the examiners, an Old School man, was pressing a student on this point, and finally, as a clincher, he said to him: "Do you think that the man with the withered hand had any part in the healing?" "Well, yes," responded the student, who was something of a wag, "I always thought that he had a *hand* in it."

danger; they would concur in urging him to surrender himself to God; they would both make the impression that the sinner has something to *do* in order to be saved. Practically the difference is thus obliterated. And even theoretically it assumes small dimensions, when one party declares that the sinner has natural ability to repent, but no moral ability, and the other that the sinner has no ability of either kind. For the natural ability is defined as a faculty that is never used, and moral inability as a moral obstinacy that will in fact never be overcome except by God's regenerating grace. If natural ability were affirmed in the Pelagian sense, it being meant that the sinner not only can, but often does, repent, without special divine aid, the difference between the two positions would be more considerable. But when the affirmation of natural ability is accompanied by that of a moral inability which is by the sinner's natural power never conquered, the assertion that yet the natural power is sufficient to effect the conquest will always have an aspect of subtlety and unreality. The distinction must seem to ordinary men very much like the difference 'twixt tweedledum and tweedledee. The marvel is that there could ever have been so heated a controversy over it. Yet the controversy had its root in that old antithesis between the two conceptions of human and of divine agency—that perennial source of conten-

tion, a contention which to all appearance can be brought to a termination only by a mutual conviction that neither side is wholly in the right, or wholly in the wrong; that both are right in their affirmations, and wrong in their negations, but that it is impossible to see how the antithetic positions can be fully harmonized with one another.

Here belongs also some consideration of the topic of election and reprobation, respecting which both the theoretical and the emotional antithesis is particularly strong. The argument for the doctrine that God has chosen some men unto salvation, and has appointed the rest unto wrath, rests chiefly on the generally admitted fact that, as men are, God must take the initiative in bringing about the restoration of right relations between him and sinful men. If it could be shown that by his especial intervention *all* men are to be restored to fellowship with him, there would of course be no such thing as *election* in the ordinary sense of that word. But the obvious fact, that men in large numbers do actually resist all reformatory influences, has led to the doctrine that God has, for reasons of his own, made a discrimination; that he exerts a force on some which infallibly issues in regeneration, while in the case of others, even though he does not leave them without some influences of his Spirit, yet he does not bring such persuasions or impulses to bear on them as

result in their conversion. Those who are thus left unreclaimed may be said to be objects of a decree of reprobation.

The ready reply of the libertarian is that the only reason why some men do not repent is their own obstinacy, their wilful refusal to yield to the good influences by which they have in fact been plied. There is no "decree" in the case, it is said, except a decree or determination, on God's part, to do all that he can do to draw the sinner away from his sinfulness.

This has a plausible sound, and seems to be an easy solution of the question. But it must be considered that the wilfulness of the sinner must have its ground in something. It appears always to be traceable to a weak moral temperament, combined with unfavorable outward influences. But these are themselves to be ascribed to a divine arrangement of things. In any case God must be conceived to have foreknown, even if he did not foreordain, the special circumstances which determine every man's character. It would seem, therefore, that he might provide counter-influences in every case adequate to overcome the debasing force of heredity and environment. That he does not do so may fairly be alleged as a proof that he purposely leaves some men to their own devices, while he chooses, in the case of others, to exert such an influence as will certainly result in their salvation. And

this, it may be argued, amounts in fact to a purpose to redeem some and to condemn others. This gives us all that is characteristic—and, as many would say, odious—in the traditional doctrine of election and reprobation.

We are, therefore, here again involved in the meshes of the puzzle constituted by the interrelations of divine and human agency. It is possible of course to take refuge in the hypothesis (above alluded to) that in the future state of existence God will exercise such influence and persuasions as will reclaim all sinners and reunite them in faith and love to the Father of spirits. It is warrantable to resort to such a method of relief. But—not to urge that mere conjectures, relating to a condition of being wholly unknown, cannot be regarded as a satisfactory and conclusive solution of the problem—there are some serious difficulties inherent in the hypothesis itself. While it certainly cannot be proved that remedial work in the future life is not carried on, the analogy of the present life does not favor the hope that it will be in all cases successful. Moreover, in so far as the hope rests on the power of God to *determine* all moral agents to overcome habits of sin, it meets the discouraging fact that the divine power does not have such success in the only sphere of which we have any direct knowledge. No one can show why it is better that moral purification should come after a long

indulgence of sinful practices, ripening into sinful habits, than that it should come before the formation of those habits, or even than that it should be secured without the intervention of sin at all. Therefore, if God is infallibly able, after the corrupting and benumbing effects of sin have long had full sway, to remedy the disease and restore moral health, it does not appear why he should not have interposed sooner, when the work would apparently have been easier, and when the result would have been so much more satisfactory.

On the other hand, we find no full solution of the difficulty by resorting to the extreme theory of moral freedom, and assuming that God is doing all that he can do for all men's salvation, but that men can, and many of them do, resist all motives and persuasives, and persist in their evil way. For the Arminian himself acknowledges that the sinner, in spite of his freedom, is virtually unable to renew himself, and requires to this end the special regenerating influences of God. To this extent he and the determinist occupy the same position; they both concede to the sinner liberty, but only a liberty to sin, while they ascribe to God the power to overcome the sinful bias, and to introduce the sinner into real liberty. The divergence comes when it is attempted to explain why not all, but only some, sinners yield to the divine influences. The Calvinist finds the ground in the divine will, which for unknown

reasons chooses, in the case of some, to stop short of exerting an irresistible regenerative power; the Arminian finds the ground in the greater wilfulness of some sinners, which is able to resist the utmost influence that God can bring to bear upon them. But the Arminian is unable to explain how it comes about that some are so much more obstinate than others; and the Calvinist is unable to explain why God, if he *can* regenerate every sinner, does not do so. The result is that each of the disputants can make what seems to be a convincing defense of his own position, while each is apt to be somewhat unfair, and certainly less successful, when assailing the position of his opponent.

This last remark is well illustrated by the efforts which are made to show that Paul, in Romans ix. and xi.[1] does not teach the doctrine of election. The favorite method is to lay stress on the fact that Paul here treats only of God's dealing with nations rather than with individuals. But it does not appear how an election is less real on that account. Moreover, the quotations which

[1] Bishop Gore's article in the *Studia Biblica* (vol. iii., pp. 37 *ff.*) is one of these. He is able, of course, to show that Paul is here treating of the relation of Jews to Gentiles in the divine scheme. But when he insists that Paul nowhere asserts an election to salvation, but only "the election of a race or Church to bear God's name in the world and be his people," he has to overlook ix. 18, 22–24, or to misinterpret it.

the Apostle makes do not refer to nations only or chiefly. In ch. ix. 15 he quotes Ex. xxxiii. 19, where God, speaking to Moses, says with reference to the Israelites alone, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"; and when he meets the objection of one who is supposed to say, "Why doth he still find fault? For who withstandeth his will?" he does not at all try to parry the objection by saying that he is talking of nations, not of individuals; and quite as little does he explain that the divine election is conditioned on the foreknown free action of men; but he simply makes a general appeal to the fact of God's absolute sovereignty, saying: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus?" (ver. 19, 20). No refined subtleties of argumentation can suffice to remove the impression which these chapters make on any unprejudiced reader, that Paul here teaches a doctrine of divine foreordination which applies both to nations and to individuals. This is freely admitted by many who reject the doctrine itself, and therefore repudiate Paul as a theological authority.

Election which is defined as God's purpose to forgive and save those who, he foresees, will in fact freely repent and believe, cannot properly be called election. The choice, the distinction between the elect and the non-elect, would according

to this definition be made solely by man; and there would be no room for any distinction due to the divine foreordination. But unquestionably not only do the Biblical writers use the words "elect" and "election," but the manner in which they use them, and the cognate terms with which they describe God's relation to men's salvation, show unmistakably that they attribute to God a real initiative, a sovereign purpose, in the election which he is said to have made. It only betrays a one-sided mind when one attempts to nullify the force of this fact by referring to other passages which seem to represent man as himself determining his religious relation to God. Thus, it is argued that, since we are enjoined to make our own calling and election sure (2 Pet. i. 10), and to work out our own salvation (Phil. ii. 12), it must be that all declarations which seem to teach an unconditional election should be interpreted by such utterances as these. Well, of course not only these two, but multitudes of other, expressions can be found in the Bible to prove that a man's salvation depends on his own voluntary attitude towards God. But if the libertarian thinks it enough to set his class of passages over against those that look in another direction, he should remember that the predestinarian has equal right to explain the passages that have a libertarian sound by those others that favor the predestinarian conception of divine

election. It would be wiser for both parties to remember that both these opposite modes of conception are found in the Scriptures, and not there found as antagonistic systems of thought, but rather as two sides of one truth—not characteristic, the one of one writer, and the other of another, but often found together in the same book,[1] or even in the same sentence.[2] They are like two threads of different colors woven together to form one cloth—so closely united that neither, except by an act of violence, can be detached from the other.

If we consider the doctrine of election from the practical religious side, we find ourselves confronted with the same two-sided aspect of it. Many men are surprised, and some are even horrified, when they read in Calvinistic books of the great comfort and joy which Christians have found in thinking of themselves as selected from eternity to be the objects of God's saving grace, while others, equally deserving, are allowed to die without it. How, it is asked, can a man rejoice in being the object of such arbitrary partiality? But after all do we not, in regard to temporal blessings, think it proper to thank God that he has favored us above many of our fellow-men? If the blessings are unmerited, the fact that others,

[1] Compare John v. 40 with vi. 37, 44; Eph. i. 4, 5 with v. 14; Heb. iii. 1 with iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 9 with iv. 1.

[2] Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28; Phil. ii. 12, 13; 2 Pet. i. 10.

seemingly no less deserving than we, are left without them, does not make them any the less blessings to us, and a ground for thanksgiving to the divine Giver. If human beings single us out to be the objects of their especial love and benefactions, we are moved to pleasure and gratitude, even though we cannot understand why we, rather than others, have been elected to receive the favors. Indeed we are all the more inclined to be thankful because we see no reason why we should have been preferred to others who are equally or more worthy. Why, then, is it surprising that men should praise God for spiritual and eternal blessings, conferred on them for no especial merit on their part? It must be considered too that the predestinarian Christian, who thus exercises gratitude for what seems to be divine favoritism, does not regard the favoritism as involving any injustice. All have sinned, he says, and fall short of the glory of God; and all therefore deserve condemnation, so that if any are saved it is because they are "justified freely" by divine grace (Rom. iii. 23, 24). Nor does he even concede that there is really any favoritism in the case in any offensive sense of the term. He contents himself with saying that the reason why God elects some rather than others is one of the mysteries which human wisdom cannot fathom.

The Arminian, however, who discards the

whole notion of a divine election, can, together with his theological opponent, thank God that a free salvation is offered to all who repent; but, if his practice accords with his theory, he cannot be thankful that God has given repentance to him rather than to others. Since, however, he holds that without God's assisting grace he never would have come to repentance, he may properly thank God for having thus led him into the way of salvation; but in so far as he compares himself with those who have resisted the divine influences, he must, if consistent with his theory, take credit to himself for the difference—for having, of his own free will, yielded to the monitions of the Spirit. If the predestinarian censures him for this, and alleges that such self-congratulation is inconsistent with the highest degree of humility, he may reply that it is always best to admit the truth, and that it is as proper to recognize one's own merits as those of another. He may even be tempted to suggest that the predestinarian who is so careful to disclaim all merit is liable to fall into the snare of a mock humility, if not of downright hypocrisy. But it is desirable that both parties should give heed to the apostolic injunction: "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand" (Rom. xiv. 4). And the injunction should have even a broader

application than that of Paul; for he was addressing two classes of Christians whom he called respectively the weak and the strong. In the case before us, on the contrary, there is no apostolic or other warrant for any such distinction. The two parties in question are of equal rank and have equal rights. It is not a case for toleration or charitable consideration, but for mutual recognition, love, and respect. They represent severally different, but legitimate, phases of Christian thought and life.

The predestinarian type of piety is that which is predisposed to magnify the grace of God in man's salvation. Both the purpose to save and the actual execution of the purpose are ascribed to divine grace. God is conceived not only as the Forgiver of the penitent, but as the Giver of penitence. As a familiar hymn puts it,

> "Grace first contrived a way
> To save rebellious man;
> And all the steps that grace display
> Which drew the wondrous plan."

Human agency and human merit in the process of salvation are reduced to the lowest point, if not nullified altogether. All the glory of one's redemption and sanctification is given to God the Father and the Redeemer. And for this there is surely Scriptural warrant enough. Paul says:

God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 4–7.)

So Peter writes:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter i. 3–5.)

The libertarian, on the other hand, while not ignoring the divine grace, lays more stress on personal responsibility in the acts of repentance and faith. He condemns his sins as being his own, freely and guiltily committed. He confesses his personal obligation to repent and to cast himself on the redeeming grace of God. He believes that in conducting the Christian life he must be on his guard against falling away from his faith. And for all this he surely has warrant enough in the Scriptures. All the denunciations of human

sin, all the exhortations to repent, all the injunctions to the regenerate, urging them to persevere in the good way and not to yield to temptations to apostasy—all this implies the existence of power and responsibility in the human agent. Even the extreme figure of being raised by divine power from the dead, which Paul uses as a description of regeneration, the same apostle does not hesitate also to use with reference to any one who is in a state of spiritual lethargy, and goes so far as to ascribe the resurrection to the man himself: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. v. 14).

So then in practical religious experience the two types of conception appear not so much to be contradictory, or even opposite, as rather mutually complementary. They are like the two sides of one leaf, the two poles of a magnet, the right and left hand—different, sometimes very different, but belonging together, and indispensable to each other. They are both represented in every earnest Christian, though not always—perhaps never—in equal proportions. In the heat of metaphysical discussion they can easily be made to seem antagonistic to one another; but, even if never theoretically reconciled, yet in the depths of the pious heart they lie down peacefully together, like the leopard and the kid of the prophet's vision (Isa. xi. 6).

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL PROBLEM. THE DEITY OF CHRIST

IN treating of the problem of the person of Christ we meet, as in the preceding chapters, with an antithesis, which calls for reconciliation, between the human and the divine; but now the antithesis is not constituted by the relation between two distinct persons, but is found in one and the same person. How can Jesus Christ be at once both man and God? That is the question which tasked the learning and the subtlety of the earliest Christian theologians; and it has never ceased to fascinate and to baffle their successors.

In one respect the course of this discussion has differed noticeably from the one concerning the coexistence of divine sovereignty and human freedom. There the tendency has often been to treat the two tenets as so incompatible with one another that they cannot both be admitted. Here, on the contrary, though the alleged double nature of Christ seems to involve a still greater incompatibility, there has been comparatively little effort to solve the problem by an outright

denial of his deity on the one hand, or his humanity on the other; the controversy has rather been over the various theories by which men have tried to set forth how the two natures could be united.

The two extreme views have indeed been held, and were early developed in the Christian Church. There were on the one hand the Ebionites, who denied the deity of Christ; and there were the Docetae, who denied his real humanity, on the other. Later came the Arians, who denied both the deity and the humanity. And in various modifications these deviations from the more prevalent doctrine have asserted themselves from time to time in the history of the Church. The Docetae, to whom Christ's human form was an illusory appearance rather than a real incarnation, have had comparatively few followers. Yet, though it is seldom found in its extreme form, the Patripassianism of Praxeas and his followers was closely kindred to it; and the spirit underlying it has made itself felt in the very strong tendency, widely prevalent from the beginning, so to magnify the divinity of the Saviour as practically, if not theoretically, to deny or to ignore his real humanity. Ebionism, however, as a doctrine, has been more frequently and positively advocated than Docetism. In the Monarchianism of the third century, as expounded especially by Paul of Samosata, it assumed a refined form scarcely to be distinguished from the Humanitarianism of

modern times. Socinianism and modern Unitarianism are more recent developments of the same tendency. For Unitarianism, though it began in England and the United States as a resuscitation of Arianism rather than Humanitarianism, has now predominantly assumed the latter form.

The doctrinal struggle of the early Church, however, had to do, not so much with the combating of these two more extreme deviations from the ordinary view, as with the adjustment of the different ways of conceiving the dual aspect of Christ's nature. Here we meet with the controversies concerning Arianism, Sabellianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Monophysitism, Monotheletism, Adoptianism, and other phases of doctrine that arose, and agitated the Church, and led to one Council after another, which aimed to put an end to diversity of views by authoritative utterances. The Council of Nice (325 A.D.) repudiated Arianism; the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) defined Christ as being one person uniting two natures. The Lateran Council (649 A.D.) condemned the Monotheletic doctrine, and affirmed that there were two wills, as well as two natures, in the one person of Christ. But no Council could suppress discussion and division. The difficulty of the subject was inherently so great that unanimity was virtually impossible. Various theories were propounded through the

Middle Ages. The question was one over which the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches differed. A fresh attempt to solve it has been made within the last century by those who embrace the theory of Kenoticism.[1]

It is not my purpose to dwell on these various theories, either by way of criticism, or even by way of a full statement of them. The point to be especially noted is this: that the very fact of so earnest and so prolonged a discussion of the question, how deity and humanity were united in Jesus Christ, proves at least that there must have been very powerful reasons for assuming the reality of the union which was to be explained. The more the notion of an incarnation of the divine Logos seems to involve a contradiction in itself, the stronger is the presumption that the notion is not an untenable conceit. The notion was not inherited either from Judaism or from Hellenism, the two phases of religious thinking with which early Christianity came into the closest contact.[2] It sprang up as an indigenous growth out of the soil of Christianity itself. Nor

[1] *E. g.*, Thomasius, Gess, Delitzsch, Ebrard, in Germany; Martensen in Denmark; Godet in Switzerland; Gore (*Incarnation of the Son of God*) and D. W. Simon (*Reconciliation by Incarnation*) in England. On the general topic see A. B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ.*

[2] So far as outward influences can be supposed to have determined the Christology of the Church, it is more plausible to find them in Oriental than in Greek sources. The speculations of the East Indians present instances of incarnations of

was it the product of an ignorant age and of shallow and superficial thinkers; it gained the assent of the keenest and most intelligent minds. That the notion did really take possession of the Christian Church as a whole, and was early developed into a dogma, is the outstanding fact which cannot be quietly brushed aside by simply alleging that the doctrine is self-contradictory or unintelligible. Such an allegation may be excusable in a non-believer in Christianity, especially one to whom anything supernatural is incredible. But no one who professes to be a Christian can in fairness so lightly set aside a belief which has been held by the great majority of the Christian Church throughout its history. All the less can this be done when the belief has reference to the person of the Founder of the Christian religion. Whoever feels himself constrained to question it must at least assume the burden of proof, and undertake to show that the dogma, though it became the current one, is not warranted by the teachings of Christ himself or of his first followers.

Especially let it be borne in mind that the question cannot be settled by showing the weakness, the untenableness, or even the apparent absurdity, of any, or even every, one of the *theories* by which Christian thinkers have

deities. The Greeks and Romans were more inclined to the opposite notion—of the deification of human beings. See Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, vol. i., p. 4, *f.*

endeavored to elucidate the doctrine of the human-divine nature of Christ. If it can be made reasonably certain that he did unite deity and humanity in himself, that is the fact to be accepted; theories concerning the fact may contradict one another, and may even all of them be inadequate and unsatisfactory; but that does not disprove the fact. The theories concerning the nature and the transmission of light have all been mere hypotheses, none of them making clear what light is, or how it is conveyed, and all of them involving suppositions that seem to contradict fundamental principles of science; but we do not for that reason abandon our belief in the fact that there is light, and that it is transmitted through celestial spaces.

It should not indeed be contended that all speculation as to the psychological and ontological problems suggested by the life and work of Jesus Christ ought to be abandoned. The activities of the human mind cannot be fettered. The more mysterious and profound the subject presented to one's thought, the more urgently is one impelled to an effort to understand and explain it. This, to be sure, is chiefly an intellectual impulse. It is not a matter of the most direct and vital consequence. In order to live an upright life, a man does not need to be versed in the vexed problems of ethics. In order to lead a religious life, a man does not need to be an expert theologian. Yet

theory and practice cannot be wholly divorced. Right thinking and right acting normally go together; and neither theory nor practice can go far out of the right way without injuriously affecting the other. But when it is by no means clear what the right theory is, and a multitude of theorists are contending with one another, it is imperative that they should remember that mutual forbearance and tolerance are of more importance than even the attainment of a correct theory. The violence and bitterness which characterized the dogmatic conflicts of the third, fourth and fifth centuries are an unsavory spectacle; and later centuries in all branches of the Christian Church have witnessed more or less of this tendency to exaggerate the importance of correct doctrine. Nevertheless the connection of doctrine and life cannot be denied by any one who considers what a revolution in respect to personal religion was brought about by Luther's revival of the doctrine of justification by faith. How close the connection may be between belief and conduct, is a question which can be determined in any case only approximately; and each case must be judged by itself.

The question, Who and what is Jesus Christ? can certainly not be regarded as one of no practical concern by any one to whom Christianity is the true and ultimate religion. In no other case so much as in this has the founder of a religion

insisted on personal allegiance and devotion to himself as a necessary part of religion. Whoever is to fulfil this condition must have a more or less definite conception of the person who imposes this requirement. Men cannot be expected to do it simply because he requires it; they must be convinced that he has a *right* to require it. And therefore the question cannot be shirked: Who is this that makes such extravagant demands? He came with no inherited greatness, yet made the unparalleled demand that all men should submit to his authority, and trust in his saving power. It was reasonable and inevitable that his claims should be challenged, and that satisfactory credentials should be required of him before complying with his demands. Looked at from this point of view, the doctrine of the person of Christ certainly cannot be regarded as one of little or no consequence; it is rather one of the highest concern.

The original disciples of Christ can hardly be supposed to have at once come to any definite theory as to his peculiar nature or character. Something exceptional in him must have impressed itself on them. All the Gospels give direct and indirect testimony to the feeling of wonder and awe which often filled his followers on account of what he said and did. "What manner of man is this?" (Mark iv. 41) was no doubt often their question, uttered or unexpressed.

"They were amazed" (Mark x. 32; Luke v. 26), we are told, at his wonderful works. They were often perplexed by his mysterious intimations, so that in spite of their intimacy with him "they feared to ask him" (Luke ix. 45) about them. This sense of his uniqueness was of course greatly intensified by his resurrection and ascension. He was then looked upon not only as the promised Messiah, but as "the Holy and Righteous One," the "Prince of life" (Acts iii. 14, 15), the sole medium of salvation (iv. 12; xiii. 38, 39), "the Judge of the living and the dead" (x. 42). He had before his crucifixion made declarations enough to warrant all these inferences concerning him—and even more. The picture given, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 21–23) and in the so-called eschatological discourse (chh. xxiv. and xxv.), of himself as seated on the throne of his glory, with all nations gathered before him, and there pronouncing final judgment on them, furnishes a warrant for the highest conceptions entertained concerning him by the early Church. These and other similar utterances (*e.g.*, Luke ix. 26), in which Jesus asserted for himself a peculiar *lordship* over men, probably were not understood by his disciples at first in the fullness of their implications. After his ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit, words of his which had seemed mystical or extravagant came back to their minds charged with a meaning which they

had previously been too "slow of heart" to take in.

The whole tone of Jesus' discourses and claims, as set forth in the Synoptic Gospels, is in perfect keeping with this assertion of his universal lordship as made at the beginning and at the end of his ministry.[1] He spake as one having *authority* (Matt. vii. 29). He claimed the right to forgive sins (Matt. ix. 6; Luke vii. 48). He declared that all things had been delivered to him by his Father (Matt. xi. 27). He summoned all the weary and heavy-laden to come to him for rest (ver. 28). He instituted a baptismal formula in which he associated himself with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19). He declared that he was to give his life as a ransom for man (Matt. xx. 28), and that through him is to come the remission of sins (Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxiv. 47).[2] It was quite natural that the religious leaders of the Jews should have asked him, "By what authority doest thou these things? and

[1] See Dorner's *Person of Christ*, vol. i., pp. 56 *ff.*, for a fuller exposition of this.

[2] It is true that these last three passages, not to mention others, have often been pronounced to be a late interpolation. But it is also true that there is no external evidence to sustain this judgment. The passages are found in the earliest manuscripts. The only plausible ground for the conjecture that, *e. g.*, Matt. xxviii. 19 is spurious, is that in the Acts and the Epistles Christian baptism is generally designated as a being baptized into Christ, with no suggestion of the Trinitarian formula. But even if it were universally assumed

who gave thee this authority?" (Mark xi. 28). The one thing which pervades the Synoptic portrait of Christ is this unique *authority* which he claimed for himself, and which is everywhere ascribed to him. We do well to repeat the question of the Scribes, Whence came this authority?

that the form prescribed in Matt. xxviii. 19 was used from the outset, there would still be no reason for expecting that, at every mention of specific baptisms, the whole form would be inserted. Inasmuch as the main point had in mind was simply to record the conversion of certain persons to the Christian faith, there was no more occasion for repeating the full form of the baptismal rite, than there now is of doing the same when the administration of the rite of baptism is mentioned. Ordinarily at present the historian contents himself with saying that certain men have been "baptized," not even adding the phrase "into Christ," or "into the name of Christ." One might as well argue from this fact that the formula ordinarily used is simply "I baptize thee," as to argue, from the manner in which Luke and Paul speak of baptism, that only the name of Christ was in their time used when the rite was administered. If the phraseology of Matt. xxviii. 19 clearly expressed the doctrine of the Trinity, as developed in the fourth century, there would be more reason for the critical assault on the genuineness of the passage. But in point of fact that doctrine is no more distinctly taught in Christ's parting commission than it is taught in Paul's benediction in 2 Cor. xiii. 14—a passage whose genuineness is practically undisputed. Too much of what are often confidently proclaimed as the results of criticism is nothing but mere conjecture, unsustained by any solid evidence. What it may result in is seen in the conclusion reached by Prof. Schmiedel in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* (pp. 1881–1883), where at the most only nine utterances of Jesus, as reported in the Synoptic Gospels, are conceded to be absolutely credible.

By what right does he call himself our Lord and Master?

The significance of this question in reference to Christology is often overlooked, whereas it is of prime importance. Christians have so long been accustomed to take it for granted, that they do not duly consider the marvelousness of Christ's success in securing assent to this authority—to his right to claim personal allegiance, obedience, and trust from men. Any one who by birth, or by any other way generally recognized as legitimate, becomes a civil ruler, is for that reason regarded as possessing authority—a right to impose laws and restrictions, and to exact obedience. But this authority is of an outward and superficial nature. Civil magistrates demand no personal devotion and affection from their subjects, neither do they undertake to make their authority extend to the inner spirit and motives of the moral life. But Jesus, who neither by birth nor by legal election was a civil ruler, who even refused to be regarded as having any political or magisterial authority (John xviii. 36; Luke xii. 14), demanded supreme personal allegiance and love, going so far as to say, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37; *cf.* John xxi. 15–17), and issued commands that took hold of the very center of the soul.

In every other case a man who puts forth anything like such extraordinary pretensions is

simply set down as a fanatic or an impostor. Almost any one, it is true, who announces himself to be the Messiah, or some other supernatural manifestation, can find fanatics ready to follow him; but his career is short, and his adherents are regarded by all men of sense as the victims of a pitiable delusion. Jesus too was looked upon by many as an impostor, and during his earthly career gained comparatively few followers; but instead of disappearing or disbanding at his death, their numbers and their influence went on increasing from century to century. The highest dignity which he claimed for himself—that he is the Head of the moral Kingdom; that he came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke xix. 10); that all deeds of kindness and beneficence are marks of allegiance to him (Matt. xxv. 45); that he is the infallible Judge of what moral character is, and what its recompense shall be (Matt. xxv. 31–46)—all this has been conceded as an unquestionable truth. Kings and sages of all nations have bowed down to him, and confessed that he is Lord.

Why, now, is it that, while the claims which other men have made to peculiar authority have been passed by with contempt, ridicule, or pity, the much more extravagant claims of Jesus have been so widely admitted to be legitimate, and his personal authority acknowledged? This is a momentous question. And the answer certainly cannot be: Merely the fact that he made the

claims. This, by itself alone, would repel men from him. The very fact of any man's demanding such extraordinary allegiance from other men would be regarded as sufficient proof that he is not entitled to the allegiance, unless he can bring with him *credentials as extraordinary as the demand*.—Nor can the answer simply be: Because Jesus wrought miracles. In his day it was thought possible for miracles to be wrought by certain men, but not as a proof that these men were therefore entitled to exercise authority over their fellows. Moreover, it was held that miracles might be wrought by Satanic agency (Matt. xii. 24), and so be no proof at all that the miracle-worker has any right to demand obedience from other men.—Nor, again, can the answer be that Jesus was entitled to claim peculiar allegiance from his fellow-men simply because he was himself a peculiarly good man. If he was only one man among others, the mere fact that he fulfilled the moral law more perfectly than most or all others could have given him no right to lord it over his fellows. His own verdict on this matter is found in his statement (Luke xvii. 10), "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do." According to this, absolute moral perfection, so far from entitling a man to exact obedience and reverence from his fellow-men, only makes him

somewhat less unworthy than others; he is still no lord, but a "servant," and an "unprofitable" one at that.

Where then are we to look for the explanation of Jesus' success in securing such a wide-spread and constantly increasing assent to his extraordinary claim of spiritual authority over mankind? The mere fact of his making it would of itself have inclined men—and even the best men—to distrust and reject him. There must have been something *extraordinary in his character and deportment* which was able to counterbalance the strong and reasonable aversion which would naturally be felt towards any man demanding, as Christ did, submission to his authority from all other men. He must have had that in him which inspired confidence in his general sincerity, his trustworthiness, his sobriety, his self-knowledge, his superior intelligence and spirituality. The first impression must have been that he was a man of peculiar moral insight and moral earnestness. Therefore those who knew him best came to have such absolute trust in his truthfulness and his superiority to every kind of self-deception, that they were ready to believe whatever he affirmed concerning himself. Yet the more those affirmations seemed to involve an assertion of supernatural authority, and of an altogether unique relation to God—as when he called himself *the* Son of God—the more need did they have of ade-

quate credentials. This need was met by his extraordinary power to work miracles. Taken by themselves alone, the miracles seemed to the eye no more remarkable than many feats that can be performed by skilful jugglers. But in *him* anything like a deceitful trick was to those who knew him simply unthinkable. Besides, his miracles had none of the appearance of prodigies of dexterity, but were in perfect keeping with the simplicity of his character and with the lofty purpose of his life. Because they were not deceptive tricks, wrought by simply human power, they appeared to be, and were by him declared to be, the working of a divine power in him accrediting him as the very Son of God. Accordingly when John the Baptist sent to him to receive fresh assurance respecting his Messiahship, he gave it in the message: "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4, 5). And in more general terms he elsewhere said: "The witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me" (John v. 36; *cf.* x. 25, 38; xiv. 11).

The foregoing sufficiently shows how poorly

grounded is the allegation sometimes made,[1] that Jesus required no other belief in his person, or attachment to it, than that which is involved in the keeping of his commandments. He did indeed require obedience; and it implies a confession of a remarkable uniqueness in him, when one admits that he had a *right* to issue *commands* at all. But he described his disciples not as mere subjects, submitting to his authority, but as "little ones that believe on" (*i.e.*, trust in) him (Mark ix. 42); and immediately after his ascension they were generally termed "believers," or those that put their trust in Christ (*e.g.*, Acts iv. 32; x. 43). He desired and commended personal love, such as was manifested towards him by the sinful woman in Simon's house (Luke vii. 44–47), and by Mary of Bethany (Mark xiv. 6–9); and such as Peter spoke of as characteristic of true Christians, even those who had not seen him in the flesh, when he wrote: "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

The portraiture thus far given of the person of Jesus Christ has been derived almost exclusively from the Synoptic Gospels—by no means because they are the only authentic sources of information respecting the Christology of the early Christ-

[1] *E.g.*, by Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 125, *f.*

ians, but because they are so regarded by many who appeal to them as presenting a different picture of Christ from the traditional one. These Gospels, they say, describe him not at all as a God, but as simply a man. These books, it is alleged, are the only ones which give us anything like an authoritative account of Jesus' ministry, and record for us his own utterances. And if they do not ascribe to him a superhuman nature, then, it is argued, whatever in other books of the New Testament appears to ascribe to him divine characteristics may or must be regarded as a later accretion, derived from some other source than Jesus' own words or deeds. Accordingly, in considering whether this view of the question is satisfactory, it was necessary first to see whether the general allegation concerning the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels is correct. And the result is that the allegation is found to be utterly without basis in fact. Essentially all the superhuman traits that are ascribed to Christ in the other books are ascribed to him in the Synoptic Gospels. He there proclaims himself to be a Lawgiver, who does not hesitate even to criticize and modify Old Testament precepts which his hearers had always regarded as of divine authority (Matt. v. 22, 28, 32, 39). He arrogates to himself the prerogative of forgiving sin, and thus naturally scandalizes the Jews, who ask with reason, "Who can forgive sins but one, even God?"

(Mark ii. 7). He portrays himself as the universal and final Judge, assigning to men eternal awards according to their good or bad conduct, which conduct itself he puts into direct relation to himself (Matt. xxv. 31–46).

In these and other kindred utterances is found the germ and essence of all the New Testament teaching and post-apostolic speculations concerning the nature of Christ. True, there is in the Synoptic Gospels no distinct ascription of deity, or even of pre-existence, to Jesus. But he is pictured as an altogether unique being, acting and speaking in such a way as almost necessarily to require the assumption that he claimed for himself superhuman, and even divine, powers and prerogatives. It is therefore quite unnecessary to go searching in extra-Christian sources for the genesis of the Christology of the New Testament. The writers of that collection of books used the Greek language; and it would have been strange if they had not borrowed words and phrases from Greek writers, so far as they were acquainted with them. But in order to demonstrate anything like a borrowing of foreign thought—an incorporation of heathen philosophy into the Christian conceptions of Christ, his nature, character, and work—something more than the appropriation of certain words must be proved; it must be shown that the words are used in the same sense. It amounts to very little to dwell on the

fact that Philo made large use of his notion of a Logos, so long as John's Logos is a different kind of Logos, though called by the same name; it might as well be argued that the New Testament conception of the Fatherhood of God was borrowed from Greek philosophy, on the ground that the Greeks made large use of the word *πατήρ*. The same is to be said of the word *μεσίτης*, which is found a few times in the Epistles of Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is not known that Paul was at all acquainted with Philo's writings. They were indeed perhaps in existence before Paul wrote his letters, but not so long before as to make it at all probable that he could have become familiar with them. Books did not circulate in those days with the same rapidity as now. Yet a recent writer says: "It is a most remarkable and significant fact that *μεσίτης*, in the special sense of a metaphysical go-between or mediator between God and mankind, is found only in Philo, Paul, and the Epistle to the Hebrews." [1] But if it is meant (as it obviously is) that we are to infer that Paul borrowed the term from Philo, is it not still more "remarkable and significant" that Paul never calls Christ the λόγος, though that was the term which Philo usually employs with reference to the mediating power or powers which he discourses about?

The truth is that there is not a particle of

[1] L. L. Paine, *Evolution of Trinitarianism*, p. 18.

evidence that Paul derived his Christology from Greek philosophy.[1] His own statement is that his gospel was not received from man, "but through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12). Furthermore he tells us that shortly after his conversion he had a conference with Peter (ver. 18), and still later with Peter, James, and John, who gave him the right hand of fellowship, and recognized him as preaching the same gospel as they were preaching (ii. 6–9). No doubt, the conception of Jesus' pre-existence is expressed by Paul as it is not in the first three Gospels. But if for that reason we are to hunt for the origin of it in Greek speculations, then we have equal reason for looking to heathen sources for the doctrine of justification by faith; for certainly this doctrine can plausibly be affirmed to be nowhere clearly taught by the Synoptists. But is it not indeed a pitiable spectacle to see Christian scholars maintaining, on the one hand, that Paul was the ablest of the original preachers of Christianity, the one who was chiefly instrumental in propagating that religion throughout the then civilized world, and who laid the foundations of the subsequent Christian theology; yet zealously arguing, on the other hand, that Paul misunderstood or corrupted the genuine gospel at the very outset? We are virtually told that the

[1] For a detailed proof of this, see A. M. Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 458, *ff.*

earliest written account of Jesus and his doctrine is untrustworthy; that Christ's own apostles, who had received for years his most careful training, failed to secure for his teaching any wide acceptance, but were at once supplanted by an outsider, who had been a bitter enemy of the gospel, but who succeeded in giving to the incipient Christian Church his own impress—an impress which has had a perverting influence from the very outset! Surely this is a humiliating situation for any one who would fain think Christianity to be the one true and ultimate religion. According to this conception of things there is no certainty as to what the original Christianity was. For Paul's letters are confessedly the earliest written sources of information concerning it that are now accessible. And though it is thought that the Synoptic Gospels embody traditions of a still earlier period, we are not yet on sure ground; for we are told that these Gospels themselves were written so late, and have been so much corrupted and interpolated, that scholars must carefully examine them, and find out by the critical sense what parts of them can be depended on as furnishing us a fully credible account of what Jesus was, said, and did. And seeing that critics very widely differ from one another on this important point, we seem to be left without any solid foundation whatever for the Christian Church and Christian faith to rest on.

Why then, after all, not resort to the Pauline Epistles as the most trustworthy source of information concerning primitive Christianity? Paul's principal Epistles are by common consent not only the oldest, but the most unquestioned, of all the New Testament books. He had had personal acquaintance with Christ's original apostles. Moreover, he is universally regarded as a man of thorough uprightness and honesty. And he, in one of the most unsuspected of his Epistles, affirms that the gospel he preached had the sanction of the leading apostles of Christ, and he twice pronounces an anathema upon any one, even an angel from heaven, who should preach any gospel other than that which he had preached (Gal. i. 8, 9; ii. 7–9). If any part of the New Testament, therefore, is well accredited, Paul's Epistles can make the claim of being that part. Accordingly we should naturally expect it to be the verdict of historical criticism that those Epistles should be taken as furnishing the most trustworthy data for an accurate account of the substance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How, then, are we to account for the persistent attempt, which so many are making, to discredit Paul's Christology? There is but one plausible explanation: it is the supernatural element in his doctrine of Christ and his work. His testimony is eagerly accepted and exploited when he can be quoted against even the Synoptic accounts of

supernatural events; as, *e. g.*, when his silence respecting the supernatural conception of Jesus is made much of as negative evidence against the stories told by Matthew and Luke. But when Paul plainly teaches Christ's pre-existence, as he is almost universally[1] understood as doing, then the Synoptic Gospels are quoted against *him*, as being the superior authority. Even if these Gospels had affirmed the pre-existence of Christ, the same men who refuse to accept Paul's affirmation of it would undoubtedly still reject it, though it were confirmed by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as by John. For the kindred account of the supernatural conception, as given by Matthew and Luke, is set aside as a late addition, not because of any external evidence to that effect,[2]

[1] Exceptions, like Beyschlag (*Christologie des N. T.*), G. H. Gilbert (*Revelation of Jesus*, and *First Interpreters of Jesus*), and a few others, only prove the rule.

[2] Within a few years the ancient Syriac version of the Gospels, discovered by Mrs. Lewis, has indeed been adduced as a proof of the correctness of the theory of the spuriousness of the accounts of the miraculous Nativity. Even if this should be shown to be the case, it would still remain true that, before this discovery, the narrative in question was rejected simply on account of its supposed inherent incredibleness. But as to the Syriac MS. itself, although in it Matt. i. 16 plainly says, "Joseph . . . begat Jesus," yet there immediately follows in ver. 18–25 the full account of the birth of Jesus from the virgin. Moreover ver. 16 itself reads: "Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus"—a singular insertion, if an ordinary kind of generation is to be understood. Accordingly, even if this reading is accepted as representing the original Greek, it does not

but because of its alleged incredibility; and Paul's unequivocal affirmation of Jesus' bodily resurrection, and of his having been seen alive by his disciples within three days after his burial (1 Cor. xv. 4–7), is rejected, although emphatically confirmed by all four of the Evangelists.

The account, in Matthew and Luke, of Jesus' miraculous conception does not itself necessarily involve an assertion of his divine, or even of his superhuman, nature. But his superhuman nature and his pre-existence being assumed, these accounts are in admirable keeping with this notion of his exceptional dignity. If a superhuman or divine being were to be incarnated, no more appropriate method of accomplishing the end could be conceived than that which has been related to us by Matthew and Luke. The real question at issue is whether there *is* anything supernatural in

discredit the story of the birth from a virgin; and the MS. does accredit Matt. i. 18–25 and ch. ii., which have been pronounced by so many critics to be spurious. The eagerness with which this faint scrap of external evidence against the Nativity stories is clutched at shows how much the wish is father to the thought. Much is made of the early age of the Syriac translation; but the MS. itself dates from about the beginning of the fifth century; and since other Syriac versions do not have the variation in question, it may plausibly be argued that this MS. does not here correctly reproduce the original Syriac version. Unfortunately the parallel narrative in Luke cannot be compared with that of Matthew, verses 16–38 of ch. i. having been lost. But Luke iii. 23 reproduces substantially the qualification, "as was supposed," which the Greek MSS. give.

the person and history of Jesus Christ. The strong drift of the present time towards a purely naturalistic view of everything inclines even many earnest Christians to concede that there was probably nothing strictly miraculous in what Jesus was or in what he did. The majority, however, even of those who are slow to admit the reality of miracles in general, would agree with Dr. Lyman Abbott,[1] who, while a strict evolutionist, would not apply the doctrine to Christ, but would make him the initiator of a new evolution. But Prof. Paine [2] takes him sharply to task for this, dogmatically affirming that this would involve the destruction of "the very order of history and the world. There can be," he says, "no exception to this order." This illustrates how wavering the verdict is concerning this crucial question, even among those who adopt to the full the most recent conclusions of natural science respecting the reign of law.

The difficulty of conceiving Christ to be a simple product of race evolution manifests itself especially when we look at the question of his *sinlessness*. When we consider with what unanimity the universal sinfulness of men has been affirmed by all classes of all nations, it is remarkable to what an extent men have been willing to regard Christ as the one absolute and stupendous exception to this

[1] *Evolution of Christianity*, p. 241.
[2] *Evolution of Trinitarianism*, p. 285.

rule. Among professed Christians particularly, of all shades, the perfect freedom of Christ from all taint of sin has always been accepted as a kind of theological axiom. Even those who have been ready to discard everything else which purports or appears to be miraculous shrink from saying or implying that he in any degree participated in the universal sinfulness of the race. Christians who regard the narratives of such miracles as the stilling of the waves and the feeding of the five thousand as legendary, and the miracles of healing as not really miracles at all—such men still are ready to assent to the traditional conception of the absolute sinlessness of Jesus Christ. Even those who attempt to explain his resurrection in a naturalistic way yet generally find no difficulty in assuming his perfect freedom from sin.

Yet it would be difficult to conceive anything more decidedly and radically supernatural than a human life exempt from all trace of moral evil. Nothing could well be a more absolute exception to a general rule; no miracle could be more difficult to prove. Whoever admits that Christ was absolutely sinless admits *eo ipso* that he was a supernatural person. It would be futile to reply that sinfulness is an unnatural, because an abnormal, condition of human beings; that all men ought to be sinless, and that therefore sinlessness is really the natural moral state of mankind. This can be called little better than a quibble. What

uniformly and everywhere takes place—features which always characterize a particular order of beings—this is "natural" in both the popular and the scientific sense of the word. We might as well call all thorny rose-bushes unnatural as to call the human race unnatural because all members of it are sinful. The simple fact is that, as the race is now constituted and characterized, all men are sinful; we take this for granted and count on it; any clear exception to this rule would be regarded as a moral prodigy—an unnatural or a supernatural fact.

Absolute sinlessness is something so intangible, consequently so impossible to prove by observation or by any scientific test, and having such an enormous presumption against it, that no one can rationally ascribe it to Christ but for the assumption of superhuman authority which he made. It goes with his claim of exceptional powers, of an exceptional relation to God and to other men. He, therefore, who tries to solve the Christological problem by denying his superhuman or supernatural character must, if he is consistent, deny also his sinlessness, as well as his miraculous powers, and his claim of superhuman authority.[1]

[1] Some Christian scholars, seeming to feel the force of this dilemma, avoid an explicit affirmation of Christ's absolute sinlessness, while yet they presumably hold it, and certainly do not explicitly deny it. Thus, Prof. Paine (*l. c.*), after affirming that Christ "must be under the law of race evolution," goes on to say that this is not inconsistent with the

One cannot well plead, as a reason for not explicitly affirming or denying the absolute sinlessness of Christ, that no one is qualified to affirm dogmatically whether Jesus was perfectly sinless or not. But why should an answer to the question be avoided? True, no man can look into the heart of another; yet no one hesitates to charge all his other fellow-men with being sinners. Why not unequivocally include Christ among these sinners? If it would "destroy the very order of history and the world" to except Christ from being "under the law of race evolution," then there must be an overwhelming presumption that he *was* like all the rest of the race in respect to sin. The only valid reason for not plainly making this affirmation about him is a confident belief that he, and he alone among men, was without sin. There is therefore no good excuse

admission that certain "individuals of the race may rise above their fellows in moral and intellectual advance; as we may speak of all men as having in them an element of divinity, so we may speak of Christ as diviner than other men and more closely related to God, and so the Son of God in a peculiar sense, without, however, differentiating him from other men, as if he did not belong with them to a common human species." If it is only a question of degree—Christ somewhat better than any other man, but still sinful—it is unwarrantable to say that therefore he is "the Son of God in a peculiar sense." As a matter of course, some man must have been, even though very slightly, morally superior to all other men; just as some tree must have been somewhat taller than any other. But in the case of the tree, who would ever think of saying that it is a tree "in a peculiar sense"?

for avoiding an explicit expression of opinion on this point. If nevertheless one should say that we have no right to be dogmatic on such a matter, then the conclusion must be that we do not know whether Jesus was sinless or not; whether he was more nearly perfect than any other man; whether even there may not have been other men more free from sin than he, though less widely celebrated. The whole matter would thus be left in a cloud of uncertainty.

But how can any one who takes this dubious attitude call Jesus in any proper sense Saviour, Redeemer, or even the supreme Moral Leader, of men? He who does claim for him any strict moral uniqueness can do so only on the ground of the Biblical account of him. And this account everywhere affirms and implies his absolute sinlessness. The proof does not consist wholly or chiefly in the fact that his disciples and followers expressly declared him to be without sin (as in 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15, vii. 26; 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5). Nor does it consist in his own profession of moral perfection (as in John viii. 29, 46). Such declarations might be explained as the language of enthusiasm or of exaggeration, if there were nothing else to confirm their exact truthfulness. The decisive proof consists in this —that Jesus was really sinless, or else he stands convicted of self-deception, or of a deliberate deception of others. He denounces the sins of

others unsparingly; but never does he, in the faintest manner, intimate that he is himself guilty of sin. Whereas the most pious men are always the most ready to confess their unworthiness before God, he never includes himself as among those that need forgiveness. He professed to have an extraordinary intimacy with God; and even those who are unwilling to pronounce him absolutely sinless yet use the strongest language in asserting the uniqueness of his moral sense and of his spiritual nearness to God. But the keener his moral sense was, the more sensitive must he have been to any flaw in his own moral character, and the more ready to confess and bewail it. But so far was he from this, that he proclaimed himself the one through whom forgiveness was to come—the one who "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10); the Head of the kingdom of God, who rewards every man according to his works (Matt. xvi. 27, 28). To enable him to hold such a relation to men, he must *at least* have been endowed with perfect moral purity and a perfect moral intuition. If he is assumed to have been lacking in these particulars, then we have the strange spectacle of one human sinner claiming absolute spiritual lordship over his fellow-sinners—claiming the right to define men's duties, and to call them to account for their moral conduct. And the justification of the claim would be, at the best, that, though not absolutely sinless, he

is much nearer perfection than the most of his fellow-men.

In point of fact, however, Jesus lays claim to no such merely relative, but rather to an absolute, superiority to other men in respect to moral excellence. Consequently, if he is not what he professes to be—absolutely sinless—then his success in securing assent to his claim must be due to sheer imposture. But there are few who have the temerity to make such a charge against him. Those who explicitly or implicitly declare him to share, however little, in the sinfulness of the race, either do not have the courage to avow what is logically implied in the accusation, or, more probably, have not thought clearly enough to see what the logical implication is.

But, as has been already pointed out, even a perfect moral character, if Jesus was only one man among others, would not have entitled him to assume any *lordship* over them. His own doctrine was that men are to show their superiority to others, if they possess it, by *service* (Luke xxii. 25, 26); and that even perfect obedience to the moral law lifts no one above this position (Luke xvii. 10). His assertion of his own perfection, therefore, even if assented to, would not have been a sufficient reason for his disciples' submitting to him as their Lord and Master, in case he was nothing but one of their fellow-men. In fact, it could have been only because they re-

garded him as something *more* than a mere fellow-man that they were ready to believe *either in his sinlessness, or in his right to assert his authority* over them as their spiritual Sovereign.

It is not necessary to assume that Christ's disciples at the outset distinctly saw what was involved in their yielding allegiance to his claims. At first, no doubt, what impressed them was something exceptional in his character. When this was followed by something altogether exceptional in his claims, they must have begun to feel that he was not merely one man among the rest. But if so, then what was he? Either something intermediate between man and God, or else divinity itself incarnate. No one can tell by what process of thought or feeling his original disciples came to a recognition of his divine nature. He called himself the Son of man and the Son of God. He spoke of angels; but neither he nor his disciples ever identified him with them. His followers called him the Messiah. They called him Teacher and Lord. They trusted him; they marveled at him; they feared him. But it was not till after his resurrection that one of them said to him, "My Lord and my God" (John xx. 28). From the nature of the case such a stupendous thought as that of God visibly revealed in human form could not be expected to take distinct shape in their minds at the very outset of their acquaintance with him. It was a conception novel to

them. Up to the crucifixion they betrayed signs of a somewhat wavering faith, though they could say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 68). A different, clearer, and stronger faith possessed them after they saw him risen triumphant over the grave, and after his promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit had been so wonderfully fulfilled at the day of Pentecost. They must then have begun to have clearer conceptions of his heavenly nature. Though he was now departed from them, they addressed petitions to him as if he were present (Acts i. 24). They remembered his parting assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). More and more the strange sayings of his which had puzzled them became intelligible, as they recalled them now in the light of their later experiences. Gradually, perhaps unconsciously, they came to see that a person such as they had known Jesus to be, and such as he had professed to be, could not be a man altogether such as themselves—that he must, in short, be one that wielded divine power and possessed divine qualities.

And so it comes to pass that in the very earliest extant Christian writings it is simply taken for granted, as an already *familiar truth*, that Jesus was the divine Son of God, who had humbled himself, leaving his heavenly glory and condescending in love to share the hardships and temptations

of humanity. Paul does not propound the view as a new doctrine, for the first time promulgated. He assumes it as something well known. In the midst of an exhortation to be generous in giving to the poor, he throws in the remark, as an enforcement of the duty, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). Such figurative language would have been unintelligible to the Corinthian Christians, unless they had learned already to look upon Jesus as having, before his earthly life, existed in heavenly glory. So when he was admonishing the Philippians to be humble, he referred them to the highest example of humility:

> Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death (Phil. ii. 5–8).

Here too the incarnation of a divine being, while more directly and fully expressed, is not set forth as a theological tenet, but is alluded to as a truth so familiar that the apostle could found on it a practical exhortation. So James, little as his short Epistle had to do with theology, and little as he had to say directly about Christ, yet refers to

him as "the Lord of glory" (Jas. ii. 1); and Peter, referring to the old prophets, speaks of them as being moved by the "Spirit of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 11). John, writing still later, more distinctly and more dogmatically attributes to him strict deity (John i. 1).[1]

[1] I have made little use of the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles, not that I regard the Johannine authorship as disproved, but simply in order to meet the deniers of Christ's divinity on their own ground. It is difficult to think that the attempt to discredit the Fourth Gospel does not have its source largely in dogmatic prepossessions. It is as well authenticated as any of the others. Little is accomplished, however, by rejecting its testimony, so long as Paul's Epistles are accepted; for his Christology substantially agrees with John's, and his writings antedate even the Synoptic Gospels. The Humanitarians have to dispose of his testimony, therefore, by simply refusing to accept it. It is easy to prove any position in this way. John's witness is rejected because it is very late; Paul's is rejected, though it is very early. And individual passages in the Synoptics are rejected because they savor too much of Pauline Christology. According to any fair principle of criticism, however, the Pauline Epistles should be regarded as of superior authority to the earliest Gospels. The claim that Jesus' own words should have more weight than Paul's, amounts to little, when coming from those who exercise the right of doubting whether anything that Jesus said is accurately reported. In any case it may be insisted that a general characterization of a person made after he has been dead twenty years may well be more correct than any quotation from his words handed down by oral tradition. Few of us can accurately remember anything *said* by deceased friends so long ago; but the impression of what they *were* remains so vivid that a perfectly faithful description of their characteristics can be given.

John's testimony, though undoubtedly his portraiture of Jesus has very distinctive marks of its own, yet is in perfect harmony with that of his predecessors. He lays no more stress on Jesus' miraculous works than Mark, who is pronounced to be the earliest of the Evangelists—indeed hardly so much. He has more to say about the peculiar intimacy of his relation to God (*e. g.*, iii. 35; x. 30; xvii. 21–25), but hardly more than is asserted in Matt. xi. 27, and implied everywhere. Twice he quotes Christ as asserting his own pre-existence (viii. 58; xvii. 5); and once (i. 1) he affirms Christ's deity. But in this he goes no farther than Paul, and only states more explicitly what is virtually implied in the Synoptists. The simple fact is that through all the history of Christianity there has never in general been found any irreconcilable difference between the Synoptic and the Johannine account of Jesus' life and character. In both he stands out as a man absolutely unique, claiming and exercising divine power, declaring himself to be the one Redeemer of sinners. Yet in both the doctrine is so blended with the history, and the person of Christ, unexampled as it is, is portrayed in such a simple, artless way, that, supernatural though the whole atmosphere of the Gospels is, the verdict of the keenest criticism has been that neither the Christ of the Synoptists nor that of John can have been a fictitious character, and

that the production of two such pictures, so different and yet so essentially alike, can have been possible only in case both were sketches from actual life.

The general conclusion must be that from the time of Christ himself there has been felt to be a uniqueness in his nature and character, and in his relation to other men, which made it impossible to classify him with them. The formulation of the doctrine of his deity was, as it naturally must have been, a gradual process. The primary interest in him was not a theologic, but a personal and religious, one. But such a phenomenon as the appearance and activity of Jesus could not fail to excite reflection and an attempt to answer the question, "What manner of man is this?" And the steady and inevitable tendency was from the first towards the conclusion that, while he was a man, he was also more than man. The evidence came not from any one source, but from all the earliest traditions and documents bearing on the topic. It did not consist chiefly in formal statements of Jesus' superhuman or divine nature, but rather in the necessary implications interwoven with all the most authentic accounts of his words and deeds. Particularly, it could not escape attention that, in all that pertains to the kingdom of God and the salvation of men, the Father and the Son are in the New Testament practically put on the same level. It is said

that the Son is to be honored equally with the Father (John v. 23). Both the Father (Luke i. 47; 1 Tim. i. 1; ii. 3; Tit. i. 3; Jude 25) and the Son (Luke ii. 11; John iv. 42; Acts xiii. 23; 2 Tim. i. 10; Tit. i. 4) are called Saviour. What is at one time called the kingdom of God (Matt. vi. 33; xii. 28; John iii. 5; Acts xx. 25; Gal. v. 21, etc.) is at another called the kingdom of Christ (Matt. xvi. 28; John xviii. 36; Eph. v. 5; Col. i. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Rev. i. 9). Both the Father (1 Tim. vi. 15) and the Son (Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16) receive the title "King of kings and Lord of lords." The angels are called the angels of the Son (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31), and the angels of God (John i. 51; Heb. i. 6). Both the Father (Rev. iv. 10; xiv. 7; xix. 4) and the Son (Heb. i. 6) are described as receiving worship in heaven. The salvation of men is ascribed indiscriminately to the love of God (John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; Eph. ii. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 John iv. 10) and to the love of Christ (John xv. 13; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25). We are said to be saved by the grace of God (Acts xx. 32; Rom. v. 15; Eph. ii. 7; Tit. ii. 11) and also by the grace of Christ (Acts xv. 11; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Gal. i. 6; 2 Thess. i. 12). The benediction of grace is invoked from the Father and the Son together (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 3; 2 John 3, etc.). Both the Father (Rom. ii. 10; xv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iv. 7; 1 Thess. v. 23) and the Son (Luke xxiv. 36; John xiv. 27;

Acts x. 36; Eph. ii. 14) are said to confer spiritual peace. Forgiveness and deliverance from sin are described as coming from God (Matt. vi. 12, 15; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. iv. 7, 8; Heb. x. 17) and from Christ (Matt. i. 21; ix. 6; John i. 29; Acts v. 31; Heb. i. 3; 1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5). Sanctification is said to come from God (1 Thess. v. 23) and from Christ (1 Cor. i. 30). The Comforter is said to be sent both by the Father (John xiv. 16, 26) and by the Son (John xvi. 7). The Holy Spirit is called both the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 3, etc.) and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19). Saving faith is represented as faith in God (John v. 24; 1 Thess. i. 8; Tit. iii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 21), but also as faith in Christ (John iii. 16; Acts xvi. 31; xx. 21; Gal. ii. 16). The object of the Christian's hope is represented to be now God (Acts xxiv. 15; Rom. v. 2; 1 Pet. i. 21), now Christ (Col. i. 27; 1 Tim. i. 1). The supreme object of the Christian's love is at one time said to be God (Mark xii. 30; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 9; viii. 3; 1 John iv. 19), at another, Christ (John xxi. 15; 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Eph. vi. 24; 1 Pet. i. 8). Love to God (1 John v. 3) and love to Christ (John xiv. 15, 23) are equally said to be tested by obedience. Christians are spoken of as dwelling in God (1 John ii. 24; iv. 13, 16), and also as dwelling in Christ (John xv. 4; 1 John ii. 24; iii. 24), and as being in him (2 Cor. v. 17; xii. 2, etc.). On the other hand both the Father (2 Cor.

vi. 16; Eph. ii. 22; 1 John iv. 15, 16) and the Son (John xiv. 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 17) are said to dwell in the Christian. Both the Father (John v. 21; Rom. viii. 11; 2 Cor. i. 9) and the Son (John vi. 40, 54; Phil. iii. 21) are said to raise the dead. The spirits of the dying are represented as being received by God (Luke xxiii. 46) and by Christ (Acts vii. 59; John xiv. 3). And the glory of the future life is described as consisting in the presence of God (Rev. xxi. 3, 4; xxii. 5), but also in the presence of Christ (John xiv. 3; Phil. i. 23).

Such a portraiture of the joint agency of the Father and the Son in the work of redemption—such an identification of their functions—running all through the New Testament, while introduced in the most undogmatic way, yet could not but furnish large material for dogmatic speculation. Indeed, we may say that we find certain beginnings of such speculation in the New Testament itself. Or rather we find that what is almost necessarily *implied* in this close association, or identification, of Father and Son in the work of redemption is more or less distinctly expressed, at least in a general way. We may here note three particulars.

(1) Christ is declared (by himself also) to be invested in general with divine power. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt. xi. 27). "All authority hath been given

unto me in heaven and on earth" (xxviii. 18). "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John iii. 35; *cf.* xiii. 3; xvii. 2; Eph. i. 20–22; Phil. ii. 9–11; 1 Pet. iii. 22). In these passages divine power and authority are explicitly said to have been conferred by the Father upon the Son. The language is so clear and unambiguous that, if taken strictly, it would mean that the Father has divested himself of what yet intrinsically belongs to him, and has made the Son the Supreme Ruler in his stead. But of course the language cannot be taken strictly. Yet unless we dismiss it as meaning nothing, or as being the wild fancy of ignorant fanatics, it must be understood as an attempt to express the transcendent thought of the essential deity of the Son, while yet avoiding the assumption of the existence of two Gods. Attributes and prerogatives which are exclusively divine are described as transferred, though such a transference is, strictly speaking, unthinkable, and it is not in the least meant that God the Father was ever for a moment stripped of any of his powers. The language is paradoxical—self-contradictory, if you please—yet used by Christ himself and his apostles with such confidence and self-consistency that it must have a deep meaning, however difficult it may be to give that meaning a clear and scientific formulation. The difficulty is not relieved by observing that this transference of divine

power to Christ is represented as taking place after his incarnation or ascension. This only aggravates the difficulty, if Christ is not conceived as pre-existent and as divine before his incarnation; for it would be representing a mere man as elevated from humanity into deity. The difficulty is lessened, though still not removed, when we connect this apparent impartation of divine power with those other passages which describe the Son as essentially and eternally divine. Then we may at least conceive that this divine glory, which was temporarily eclipsed by the life of humiliation, was resumed after the resurrection. This in fact is precisely the manner in which the matter is presented to us by Paul in Phil. ii. 5–11.

(2) Closely related to the conception just considered are certain passages in the New Testament which speak of Christ's relation to the work of creation. John says: "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John i. 3). Again, "The world was made through him" (ver. 10). In closely similar language Paul says in Col. i. 16, 17: "In him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth. . . . All things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." So also in 1 Cor. viii. 6: "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all

things, and we through him." And in Heb. i. 2 it is said that God hath "spoken unto us in his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds." These three different writers thus coincide almost verbally in their doctrine that the Logos was the medium "through" which the work of creation was executed.

So far it is easy to go. But if we undertake to determine in a scientific way just how the sacred writers conceived Christ's relation to the creation, we meet with serious difficulty. We are familiar enough with instances of one man doing work through the agency of others. A business man devises schemes which his employees execute under his direction. Masters give orders which servants carry out. The thinking and planning is done by the one; the mechanical and manual labor is done by the other. But it is impossible to find here any illustration of the process of creation. Creation is intrinsically a divine act. It cannot be conceived as performed by a finite, subordinate being, who receives directions from the Infinite One how to do it. And accordingly not only in the Old Testament (as Gen. i. 1; Deut. iv. 32; Ps. cxlviii. 5; Is. xl. 28; Mal. ii. 10, etc.), but in the New also, God the Father is uniformly called the Creator (Mark xiii. 19; Rom. i. 25; Eph. iii. 9; 1 Pet. iv. 19; Rev. iv. 11; x. 6). When therefore Christ is described as one through whom God

created the world, the conception can be paralleled by no human analogy. We can only say that the Father and the Son are mysteriously associated. The Son's part in the process, so far from being that of a menial, merely executing the paternal orders, is conceived as a proof of his own divine dignity, so that he is declared to "uphold all things by the word of his power" (Heb. i. 3), and to be the one in whom "all things consist" (Col. i. 17).

(3) In perfect consistency with the foregoing are those passages which go yet farther, and deal with the essential (or ontological) relation of Christ to the Father. Here, as there, he is invested with divine attributes, but at the same time is spoken of as derived from God. Here belongs the designation "Son of God"—"*the* Son of God." In human relations a son is derived from his father; but apart from this relation, he is the equal of the father—of the same race, the same nature, the same dignity. When Christ is called the only-begotten of the Father (John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9), and, in general, when he is called *the* Son of God (Matt. xiv. 33; xxvii. 43; Mk. i. 1; John ix. 35; Acts ix. 20; Rom. i. 4, etc.), he is pictured as an altogether unique being—a divine being who is to be honored by men even as they honor the Father (John v. 23), and who can say of himself, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9; *cf.* xii. 45).

But though this is the most frequent and familiar figure under which Christ's relation to God is set forth, it is only one. The same apostle who so frequently calls him the Son of God calls him also the Word (John i. 1, 14; Rev. xix. 13). It is not necessary to decide whether the Greek term, Logos, is here best rendered by "word," or whether it has the more comprehensive meaning of "reason." God is conceived as spirit (John iv. 24); and spirit cannot be conceived apart from thought, nor thought apart from language. When the Redeemer is called the Logos, therefore, he is represented to be as essentially connected with God as thought is connected with mind; and so John may well affirm that the Word was in the beginning with God, and was himself God; but not as though there were two distinct Gods, any more than a human spirit is to be conceived as double when the spirit is spoken of as distinct from the spirit's thinking.

Somewhat kindred with the foregoing is the figure found in Heb. i. 3, where the Son is called the "effulgence" of God's glory. Light may be called an emanation from a luminary; but the two things cannot be separated in thought. The sun without its splendid effulgence would be no sun; yet there can be no effulgence without a luminous body from which it comes.—A similar conception is found in 2 Cor. iv. 6, where Paul says that the light of the knowledge of the glory

of God is given in the face of Jesus Christ, and elsewhere where a unique "glory" is ascribed to Jesus, such as is ascribed to no other being but to God alone (John i. 14; ii. 11; James ii. 1).

Another figure used to express the essential relation between the Father and the Son is found in Col. i. 15, where Christ is called "the image of God, the first-born of all creation." So also in 2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3. Similar is the phrase, "existing in the form of God," in Phil. ii. 6. The conception is that of an original and a copy. Christ is compared to a statue or a seal reproducing the exact features of the Deity. The language is quite like that which is often used in human relations, as when a child is said to be the image of his father.

The very variety of these figures should make one cautious about pressing any of them rigidly. They are only attempts to shadow forth a mysterious relation which no human language is adequate distinctly to express. Yet there is a striking coincidence in these different representations. If we drop the mere costume of the descriptions, it may be said that they portray a being who, while divine, is yet not identified with the Supreme and Absolute Being. He is not the Father, but the Son. The characterizations of him waver between those which ascribe to him the full and distinctive attributes and functions of Deity, and those which represent him as an efflux or emanation from the Deity. Yet he is not spoken of as created, but

rather as co-eternal with the Father, not the product of the divine will, but rather the medium of the divine self-manifestation.

Such being the picture presented by the immediate disciples of Christ, it was impossible for the post-apostolic theologians to regard him as merely one human being among the others. It was inevitable that, finding him everywhere invested with divine prerogatives, they should come to the conclusion that he was a divine being. But being strict monotheists, they found themselves confronted with the question, how they could reconcile this conclusion with their monotheistic principles, and how they could still regard him as a real fellow-man. This problem, therefore, next claims our attention.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL PROBLEM. THE INCARNATION

IT has been shown in the previous chapter how urgent the considerations were which led the early Christians to regard Jesus Christ as divine. It is not strange that in many minds the inference was drawn that he could not have been really human. The Docetic heresy was one of the very first of which we have any trace. In the New Testament itself we find it alluded to (1 John iv. 2; 2 John 7), and sharply condemned. The pains taken by John expressly to affirm Christ's humanity (John i. 14), in close connection with his equally emphatic assertion of Christ's deity (ver. 1), is probably an indication that he had there the same kind of heretics in mind. Possibly also Paul makes an indirect reference to the same, when, in 1 Tim. ii. 5, he says: "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." There seems at all events to have been felt in those early days the need of positively affirming the real humanity of Christ

in connection with the affirmation of the reality of the incarnation, as we see in Heb. ii. 14–18, where the writer is careful to insist that "it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren."

In general, however, there has never been any extensive denial of Christ's humanity. Though often overshadowed by a disporportionate emphasis laid upon his deity, it has always been held theoretically, and has always been affirmed by the principal creeds of the Church. The controversies have not been so much over the fact of the twofold nature as over the question, *how the fact is to be conceived or explained.* The New Testament presented the elements of the problem, telling of the one Messiah to whom both divine and human characteristics were ascribed, but giving no theory of the union of the human and divine, and not even suggesting that there was any problem to be solved at all. The discussions on the subject which soon began to arise culminated in the Creed of Chalcedon, which pronounced that in Jesus Christ two natures were united in one person. This has continued to be for the most part the doctrine of the Church. But it cannot be said to remove the difficulties of the problem. It is not clear precisely what meaning we are to attach to the words "person" and "nature" as used in those early creeds. That there was some confusion and obscurity of conception on this point is

shown by the Monotheletic controversy which followed the Chalcedon Council. In the case of ordinary men it is easy to make the distinction, that "nature" relates to the whole of man's two-fold constitution—the physical and the spiritual; whereas "person" relates only to the spiritual, self-conscious part. Thus, it is natural for men to have finger-nails; but these can hardly be said to belong to a man's personality. In the case of Christ, however, the distinction between his two natures is not that his human nature consisted simply in his having a human body, though this view has been held by a few. The Church doctrine has been that he had a human *soul*, as well as body; and the necessary implication is that he had both a divine and a human soul; but this seems to involve a double personality as well as a double nature. In so far as the distinction between nature and personality had to do with the spiritual constitution of the God-man alone, it has not been easy to maintain the distinction clearly; and therefore it has been difficult to show how there could be two natures in one person.

It is no wonder, then, that the discussions and wrangles over this question, between the fifth and ninth centuries, with all the acuteness often displayed, were excessively dreary and profitless. So long as the dogmatic statement was left in the formal and barren shape in which the Council of Chalcedon had put it, one could rest in it as

being perhaps as good a definition of the God-man as could well be devised. But as soon as an attempt was made to analyze the conception more particularly, it was found that there were the elements of irreconcilable dissensions covered up under the vague formula concerning the double nature and single personality of Christ. And the obvious reason was that it had been attempted to separate things that belong together. Nature and person can indeed be distinguished: nature is the more comprehensive term; but it is also an abstract term. Human nature—"humanity"—is a collective designation of the characteristics which belong to men in general. There is no concrete humanity; but there are concrete persons. Personality is the most important part of humanity.

It is easy to see, therefore, how the old theologians came to ascribe two wills to Christ. Since they gave to "nature" a quasi-concrete sense, attributing to human nature all the properties that actually belong only to human individuals, among which of course is the will, it followed logically that, if Christ has two natures, he must have two wills. It follows, however, with equal necessity, that he must have a double set of faculties throughout; and this plainly means a double personality. It is scarcely possible, by any subtlety of metaphysical or psychological distinctions, to avoid this difficulty. Perhaps the

ablest modern defender of the Chalcedonian formula is the Rev. H. C. Powell, who presents the matter as follows:[1] Taking up the question of the human Ego, he refutes the doctrine of Hume and J. S. Mill, that it has no distinct reality, but is only the succession of emotions, cognitions, volitions, etc., of which men are conscious, and concludes that the Ego is a distinct entity. This is satisfactorily accomplished. It is simply one phase of the general truth that quality presupposes substance, that there can be no activity without *something* that acts, that acts of consciousness imply a conscious agent. The author now supposes that at the Incarnation

> God the Son took our nature into indissoluble union with his Self; he made himself its *Ego*. In so doing he acquired the power of thinking, willing, and acting in the same way and under the same *structural* conditions and limitations as belong to all men as men. . . . At the same time he remained . . . in the divine sphere . . . precisely as he was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, Eternal God. . . . Our Lord . . . became the *Ego* of two spheres—the divine and the human.

The Ego of the divine nature, being omniscient, must of course have been fully conscious of what took place in his human mind; but the reverse did not hold true. Yet the author assumes that

[1] *The Principle of the Incarnation*, pp. 157–178.

the divine consciousness made communications to the human consciousness; *e. g.*, that to our Lord's human mind was imparted a knowledge of his own Godhead, of the Trinity, of his Messiahship, etc.

The obvious difficulty with the theory—one not overlooked by Mr. Powell himself—is that it gives us practically two distinct persons. If the divine Son imparts knowledge to the human Son, the oneness of the two persons is not secured by saying that it is the same Ego which belongs to the two spheres. Moreover, that abstraction, humanity or human nature, is spoken of as if it were a concrete thing with which the divine Ego connected itself. All that we can have any definite conception of in the case is the one concrete person, Jesus Christ. That he was a real man, there are few now that doubt. How he could at the same time be divine, is a question not really answered by the Chalcedonian formula. The difficulty may be somewhat relieved by remote analogies, but it is not removed.

Mention should, however, in particular be made of a modern modification of the Chalcedon doctrine, which aims to make more intelligible the conception of the union of two natures in one person. Dr. Dorner,[1] instead of making the *personal* Logos the basis of the conception, would rather take as the starting-point the two *natures*—his notion being that, as in every human being the

[1] *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, §§ 102–104.

personality comes later than the individual, so in the case of Jesus there was a real growth out of an embryonic unconscious state into a state of conscious personality. But in the case of Jesus he holds that, as the basis of his personality, there was a union of *two* natures—the divine and the human—forming the antecedent and the basis of the *one* personality which in a gradual and normal way grew out of this divine-human nature, just as an ordinary personality is evolved out of the unconscious natural individual, as it exists in the embryonic and infantile state. This theory avoids some of the difficulties besetting the one previously considered. It is not so much exposed to the danger of subordinating now the one, now the other, of the two factors of which the God-man is conceived to be the union. It makes the development of the person of Christ more analogous to that of persons in general. Both the humanity and the deity are conceived to have been developed together, the culmination, however, not having been reached till after the resurrection.

On the other hand, however, this theory embodies some serious difficulties of its own. The fundamental assumption, that there was at first a union of two natures, while as yet there was no personality, is a conception which can scarcely be carried out with any clearness. The word "nature," which properly is a generic and abstract

term, denoting the sum of the characteristics of an individual or class of individuals, is here employed in a concrete sense. We have "nature" without any distinctive attributes. But what can be meant by divine nature, to which belongs no power, no knowledge, no love, no will? What is the difference between two natures—the divine and the human—both of which are alike conceived as destitute of any distinctive traits? Furthermore, the theory seems to require us to conceive of an inchoate and growing deity of the Son of man. But the notion of deity is that of a perfect and infinite being; if we can speak of a God who is so imperfect and finite as to be found in the form of an unconscious or dimly conscious infant, do we not expose ourselves to the charge of using language loosely, and thus of covering up the real difficulty which we are trying to remove?

It is not necessary to dwell more particularly on the various ancient theories that were propounded as explanations of the problem of the Incarnation. Hardly any one now regards even the speculations of John of Damascus, acute as they were, as a satisfactory solution; and scarcely more so the Lutheran doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

A different, and in some aspects an apparently more satisfactory, mode of solving the difficulty is, however, undertaken by the advocates of the doctrine of the *kenosis*, or exinanition, of the

Logos. It starts from the representation made by Paul in Phil. ii. 5–8, where the humiliation of Christ is described by saying that he "emptied himself," and where the whole description is plainly that of a passing from a state of divine exaltation to one of human lowliness and even of servitude. A closely kindred statement is made in Heb. ii. 9–18, where Jesus, who had just been spoken of as God's Son, through whom he made the worlds, and whom all the angels had worshipped, is now said to have been made a little lower than the angels, to have been made partaker of flesh and blood—in all things like unto his brethren. Less detailed, but equally explicit, is the picture conveyed by the petition of Christ in John xvii. 5, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." The general impression necessarily made by these passages is that the Son of God underwent a change from a state of divine exaltation to one of human weakness and even of suffering. These intimations seem to furnish the materials for a *theory* of the twofold nature which the representations of the New Testament everywhere imply, though without expressly affirming it.

There are various phases of kenotic theory; but they all coincide in the general conception that in the Incarnation the Logos laid aside, to some extent at least, his divine attributes, and

voluntarily subjected himself to the limitations and experiences of humanity. There can be no doubt that some kind of a kenosis of the Son of God is both implied and affirmed in the New Testament. The Scriptural picture of it is mostly confined to the figure of a temporary surrender of heavenly glory, exaltation, or dignity. The notion that there was a voluntary loss, or occultation, of divine faculties and functions, comes from the attempt to state, more definitely than the Bible does, in what the "self-emptying" consisted. But at this point the difficulties begin to accumulate, and the theory assumes numerous forms. There is a difficulty in conceiving how a divine being can abdicate his divine attributes—how, for example, an omniscient being can consciously and purposely divest himself of omniscience—a difficulty which has led Augustine and many another to explain Christ's affirmation of his own ignorance of some things by saying that he really knew, but only pretended not to know. This difficulty is met in a more aggravated form when the Logos is thought of as existing in the form of a new-born infant, with only germinal faculties of mind. How can such a being be looked on as in any proper sense divine?

Then such questions arise as these: How, by a mere act of will, could the divine Logos dispossess himself of his *characteristic* attributes? And if he could, would he in that case continue to be the

divine Logos? Was the human Christ conscious of his previous glorified condition? If so, must he not have been conscious of all that he was in that condition? And so must he not have been as completely omniscient in the incarnate state as in the pre-existent one? Was the Logos *all* in the incarnate being? or was there a sort of diremption of his existence—a heavenly and an earthly mode of existence going on side by side? But if so, what is this but a double personality as much as the one which is involved, though in form denied, in the Symbol of Chalcedon? The kenotic doctrine, it is true, expressly aims to guard against the danger of positing a bi-personality; but the fact that its representatives make the personal Logos the center of the personality still tends towards the same heresy; for that starting-point, if consistently adhered to, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to secure in the theory any thoroughly *human* person. If, however, the Logos is conceived to be so depotentiated as to be virtually only a human person, then the many indications of divine characteristics and functions which are shown in his words and work will have to be explained as occasional especial communications from the Father. But this would put him nearly or quite on a level with inspired prophets. Thus in the different phases assumed by the kenotic doctrine there is seen somewhat of a vibration between those in which deity,

and those in which humanity, becomes the preponderant, if not exclusive, factor in the personality of the incarnate Son.

These are only hints of the difficulty of attaining in this way a satisfactory solution of the problems involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is not necessary to examine in detail the various forms which the theory of the exinanition of the Logos has assumed. As already remarked, it has the merit of owing its origin to distinct suggestions found in the New Testament. It is an effort to evolve into a more scientific form the doctrine involved in those suggestions. But the result of the effort reveals afresh the inherent difficulty of framing a doctrinal statement that does not seem to be exposed to the charge of failure to accomplish the end aimed at. It does not follow that these attempts should cease. It is well-nigh impossible not to speculate on such high themes, and to attempt to comprehend with the head the truths and facts which have most impressed the heart. But the attempt should always be made with the underlying conviction that *the reality of the facts dealt with does not stand or fall with our ability to give a satisfactory solution of the speculative difficulties encountered in the effort to explain them.*

One or two modern methods of solving the difficulty may be mentioned. One mode of conception by which some are now trying to clarify

the doctrine of the Incarnation is the notion that divinity and humanity are essentially the same. We are told of the eternal humanity of God, and of the divinity of man; and it is concluded that the Incarnation is after all a simple matter. If God is human as well as divine, and man is divine as well as human, then surely, it is thought, there is nothing incredible or impossible in the Church doctrine of the union of deity and humanity in Jesus Christ.

This solution of the difficulty before us sounds simple and easy; but it is altogether too easy. It will answer for one who is in a poetic or rhetorical mood; but it will not bear close inspection. If deity and humanity are identical conceptions, then we can dispense with one of the terms. We can say that both God and men are simply men; or we can say that the Creator and the created are alike simply gods. But this of course is not meant. Stress is laid upon the proposition that the Divine Being is also human, and that human beings are also divine. Something else than an identical proposition is intended; a difference is implied between the human and the divine. What, then, is the difference? This is a question which is left unanswered. It might be imagined that, according to the conception under consideration, humanity is incipient deity—that, as an immature sheep is called a lamb, an immature god is called a man, the difference being simply

that between the imperfect and the perfect. But such a view is contradicted by the companion doctrine, that God is human as well as divine; for then we should have to profess the absurd belief that God is imperfect as well as perfect. There must therefore be a difference, not in degree, but in *kind*. Then must follow the assumption that both in God and in men there is a union of two different kinds of being—an assumption that gives us, indefinitely repeated, a problem very similar to that which is presented in the Incarnation itself which this theory of the affinity of the human and the divine is supposed to simplify. In short, this conception is a confused and misty one, which renders us no service in solving our problem. No one can tell precisely what is meant by it, and it must therefore be dismissed as worthless.

We have all been long familiar with the Biblical statement that man was made in the image of God. It has always been the belief of the Church that the spiritual nature of man resembles that of God—that man and God are alike in that both have the faculties of intelligence and reason, a sense of right, and a capacity to love other moral and sentient beings. Together with this goes the opinion that men sustain a peculiarly close relation to God—that they are under obligation to serve and love him, and that they are the objects of his peculiar love and care. Nothing

like this can be said of the relation between God and any of his other creatures. His tender mercies are indeed over all his works; but while, with all its difficulties, the conception of an incarnation of Deity in human form has been readily entertained, it would seem absurd, and even blasphemous, to think of such a union of Deity with even the highest of the irrational animals. But notwithstanding the belief in a peculiar kinship of man with God, there has always prevailed with equal force the conception that there is between them a radical and insuperable difference—a difference expressed especially by the distinction between the finite and the infinite. Being unlimited in power and knowledge, being the Creator and Sustainer and Sovereign of the universe, being aboriginally holy and perfect, and therefore incapable of growth—all this puts God into a category entirely by himself. The notion of human beings attaining divinity has always been abhorrent to Christian feeling. Taken in anything like a literal sense, it is simple polytheism. The oft-quoted utterance of Athanasius, that the Word was made human that man might be made divine,[1] can hardly have been meant by him to be taken in anything but a rhetorical sense. The Unity and Absoluteness of God would otherwise have no meaning.

[1] *De Incarnatione*, § 54. Some of the other Greek Fathers use similar expressions.

This misty notion of humanity as having in it an element of deity (not so distinctly, however, the corresponding notion of deity as having in it an element of humanity) appears in the doctrine of one of the most noted of modern theologians—Albrecht Ritschl. In his most elaborate treatise [1] he deliberately sets forth the reasons why Jesus Christ may properly be *called* God, though he unequivocally rejects not only the narrative of his miraculous birth, but the doctrine of his pre-existence; and then adds that it is not only allowable, but necessary, to hold that the "title" of Deity which is conferred on Christ may be conferred also on his followers! What can be made out of this but either that the "title" is merely complimentary, *real* deity not being meant to be ascribed to Christ or his followers, or else that there is to be a general and genuine apotheosis? If the first is meant, then the best that can be said of those who talk so freely of the "deity" of Christ is that they only "palter with us in a double sense," and come dangerously near to the appearance of dishonesty. If the second is meant, then it involves a return to genuine polytheism. And yet this kind of Christology is widely heralded as the restoration of pristine Christianity! If Paul were living, what more pertinent comment could he make on such theology than to repeat what he

[1] *Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., p. 351.

wrote to the Corinthians, "Though there be that are *called* gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are gods many and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him" (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6)? [1]

This doctrine, that all men are (at least potentially) divine, and Jesus only somewhat more divine than the rest, affords of course no solution of the problem of the Incarnation. It is simply a denial that there ever was any incarnation, in the sense in which that term has always been used. The problem is solved by denying that there is any problem to be solved. But a new problem is created—how a man, born like other

[1] That this is not an unfair judgment of Ritschl's Christology will appear, if one reads, *e. g.*, the following sentence in his *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, § 24: "If the grace and faithfulness, and dominion over the world, which are evident both in Christ's active life and in his patience in suffering, are also the actual attributes of God and those that are essential for the Christian religion, then the right appreciation of the completeness of the revelation of God through Christ is assured by the predicate of his Deity, in accordance with which Christians are to trust in him and to worship him even as they do God the Father." So far as the meaning of this can be enucleated from the studiedly obscure phraseology, it means that, Christ being morally like God, he may properly receive the "predicate" of Deity, *i. e.*, may be called God. It follows that whoever else, say, "the spirits of just men made perfect" in the other world (Heb. xii. 23), exhibit the same moral traits may also be called gods, and be worshipped even as God the Father is worshipped. What better warrant can be needed for the practice of worshipping Mary and other saints? Roman Catholics themselves do not go so far as this.

men, and inheriting the weaknesses of humanity, can have gained, and so generally maintained, the reputation of being actually divine as well as human.

Another and kindred method of solving the problem of the Incarnation is just now becoming current, viz., the allegation that the peculiarity of the personality of Jesus consisted in the *moral unity* which connected him with God the Father. The aim seems to be to avoid all puzzling questions concerning a physical or metaphysical oneness of God and Christ. The moral nature is the more important and the more intelligible part of the personality; and if Christ was perfectly one with God ethically, is not that, we are asked, all that can reasonably be demanded as an article of faith?

This conception only shows afresh how easy it is to delude one's self and others with a new phrase, while there is no new thought. What is meant by "moral unity," as here used? If it is assumed that Jesus and God are two *strictly distinct* persons, their moral unity can mean nothing more than their moral *likeness*. God is morally perfect; Jesus also is morally perfect; in other words Jesus is sinless. The new phrase means absolutely nothing more or else than this old familiar doctrine of Jesus' moral perfection. By the use of the term "unity" there is apparently involved a certain concession to the traditional conception

of the oneness of Christ's personality, as combined with the duality of his nature. But when the duality of the nature is denied, the doctrine in question simply amounts to a new way of asserting an old tenet. But it involves, implicitly at least, the further assumption that Jesus was simply human, however unique in his moral attainments. And so, instead of solving the real problem, it only reintroduces the old difficulty, viz., that of understanding how Jesus, as one man among the rest of mankind, and he alone, can be proved to have been morally perfect.

But Humanitarianism, under whatever form, can never furnish a solution of the problem of the Incarnation. It simply denies the fact which is to be explained, and then stands helpless before the problems involved in the confessed uniqueness of Christ. Any theory which reduces him to the level of a mere man runs absolutely counter not only to the testimony of the New Testament, but also to the general experience and convictions of Christendom. It makes a proof of his sinlessness impossible. It takes away all valid ground for according to him any exclusive uniqueness of character, or of relation to other men. It makes his assumption of *authority* over other men to be arrant arrogance, and even blasphemy. If one seeks to avoid the dilemma by doubting whether he ever did make these extraordinary claims—whether he ever did set himself up as anything

but an ethical teacher—then he has to brush aside not only Paul and John, but Peter and James and Matthew and Mark and Luke and the Epistle to the Hebrews, and decide the whole matter by his direct intuition, in the face of all the historical and documentary evidence that is available.

This solution of the problem before us must therefore be pronounced to be a cutting of the knot rather than a loosing of it. It consists in adopting pure naturalism as adequate to explain all the facts of nature and history, and then in simply rejecting all evidence which conflicts with this fundamental assumption. Applied to the Christological problem, it takes the form of expurgating or discrediting certain books or sections of the New Testament, not because they are not so well authenticated as others, but because they present historical statements or doctrinal propositions which seem to contradict the naturalistic assumptions of the critic. That process is sometimes called, but miscalled, Higher Criticism; for this properly means simply an attempt to determine (so far as possible) the exact facts concerning the origin and composition of the Biblical books. In this sense it should be welcomed and honored; but it travels out of its province when it undertakes to determine by pure conjecture, apart from any external or internal evidence, that certain passages or sections are spurious or interpolated, or when it rejects certain statements as

being inherently improbable. Of course every one has a right to disbelieve anything that seems to him improbable, wherever he may find it; but such disbelief is not Higher Criticism any more than the rejection of any assertion of any sort can be called Higher Criticism.

Pure naturalism can interpret the New Testament only by explaining the greater part of it away; for the book is permeated with the supernatural. The person of Christ in particular stands out as altogether unique. He is pictured as not only a miracle-worker, but as himself a living miracle. All attempts to set forth his personality and life without assuming a supernatural element can result only in an arbitrary expurgation of the book and an arbitrary distortion of the person. And no relief, but only increased confusion of thought, is gained when it is held up, as an important discovery of modern theology, that the natural and the supernatural are in fact one and the same. If they are the same, then they need but one name; and which shall it be—"natural," or "supernatural"? This question alone is enough to indicate the true animus of the theory: it is only a thinly-disguised way of dispensing with the supernatural altogether.[1] It is as misty and

[1] The antithesis of nature and the supernatural has often been made unnecessarily sharp, as when a miracle is called a violation or suspension of natural law. Dr. Bushnell's distinction (in his *Nature and the Supernatural*) is much more correct. Even though he may have gone too far in defining

futile as the above-considered attempt to identify the human and the divine. It is a combination of words which convey no clear idea. The miraculous may be variously defined; among these definitions may be one by which the miraculous is virtually evacuated of all miraculousness. And so long as no special application of the definition is made, the author of the definition may succeed in mystifying both himself and many of his readers into the belief that something really intelligible and helpful has been propounded. But when an application of the definition is attempted, it is at once seen how hazy and deceptive the conception is.

Consider, for example, the miracle of the stilling of the tempest by a simple word of command. Is it "natural" for a violent wind to be hushed into an instant calm by a human voice? Is it possible to explain the event by any forces of material nature?—And nothing is gained when the position is taken that there is no independent force in material nature—that all force is really

human volitions as supernatural, his main position is sound: that miracles are events produced by special divine or supernatural interpositions, *additional* to the ordinary forces of nature. A clear distinction between nature and the supernatural is thus still strictly maintained. The attempt, sometimes made, to adduce Bushnell as supporting the above-mentioned identification of nature and the supernatural, is unfortunate—none the less so when the qualification is added, that he *would* have held it more clearly if he had lived half a century later.

divine force. Be it so, that the tempest was stilled by divine power; yet it was *Jesus* who exercised the power; and so his divinity is emphatically affirmed rather than disproved. But the naturalistic doctrine by no means intends any such result. And consequently such miracles as the stilling of the tempest, the multiplying of the loaves, the healing of leprosy and blindness, are discredited by it, and put to the account of legendary accretions of the biography of Christ. Even the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is more distinctly and abundantly affirmed than any other single fact in his life—the fact on which very especial stress is laid throughout the New Testament, and of which Paul said to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 17), "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain"—even this is now sometimes divested of its supernatural character; and the bodily reappearances of Jesus after his crucifixion are declared to be illusions of excited imaginations, or the mythical dress of the notion that Christ's spirit survived the death of his body.[1]

[1] This latter view is presented in one of a series of articles in the weekly *Springfield Republican* (Nov. 14, 1902), later published in book form under the title *The Supremacy of Jesus*, by Rev. Joseph H. Crooker, D.D. He says: "The very fact that the disciples did come to believe in Jesus as risen from the underworld and alive at God's right hand is the best possible evidence, not only of his grandeur of character, but of the immortality of the soul. What survives all critical analysis and scientific objection is the fact that Jesus

It is impossible that such a view, breaking loose, as it does, from the only historical sources of information, should give general and permanent satisfaction. It leaves in fact the whole question to be decided by arbitrary conjecture, and makes a mere postulate outweigh all the testimony of Christian history, tradition, and faith.

Nevertheless this emphasizing of the human nature of Christ has rendered a good service. It brings into greater prominence a truth which has been too much overlooked. It helps to make more real to us the Biblical teaching of the oneness of Jesus with the children of men, like whom, we

so lived that he made his friends absolutely sure of his immortality and their immortality." The logic of this is obscure. For (1) it is certain that the Jews generally believed in immortality before Christ appeared. (2) If they had not believed in it, it is not clear why Jesus' life should have made them sure of it. (3) Even if his life was so remarkable as to make them believe in *his* immortality, it does not appear how this assured them of their *own* immortality. (4) It does not appear why the assurance of his immortality should have given rise to the story of his bodily resurrection.—What does survive all critical analysis is that Paul, who had immediate intercourse with Christ's disciples, distinctly affirms his bodily resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 4–8)—which disproves all theories of a mythical origin of the resurrection story; and that the faith of Christ's disciples in him, so far from leading them to *expect* his resurrection, had been dashed by his death, and was revived only by the *fact* of his resurrection—which disproves all theories of the resurrection's being the product of excited imaginations. If one were disposed to reply that Christ's own predictions of his resurrection were enough to lead his disciples to expect it, this would only furnish an additional proof that the resurrection really did take place.

are told, he was tempted in all points, though without sin (Heb. iv. 15), and, having been thus tempted, is able to succor them that are tempted (ii. 18). That he was a real man; that he shared the experiences, the trials, and sorrows of humanity—this is a truth which cannot well be too much enforced. But the religious force of it has always depended on the assumption that Jesus was an altogether unique man—not merely *a* man, but *the* Son of man—not merely one of the human race, but the *Head* of the race, the second Adam—not merely a man who lived many hundreds of years ago, and then died like all others, but one who in a peculiar sense is alive for evermore, and has a present and direct and intimate relation to all members of the Kingdom of God. If we know anything about him, we know that he gave this account of himself, and that this faith has possessed and animated his followers from the beginning.

Now this doctrine of the essential *uniqueness* of Jesus Christ—not to make any more specific allegation concerning him—flatly contradicts the naturalistic theory. The advocates of that theory, when self-consistent, have to deny not only the divinity and incarnation of Christ, but also this uniqueness which he and his Church have uniformly ascribed to him. They find themselves obliged to ignore or to distort the documentary evidence which we have concerning him; to con-

tradict his own claims; and to declare the Christian Church in general to have been radically wrong in its conception of the nature and office of the Redeemer. This is not a solution of the problem presented to us; it is an arbitrary rejection of the facts which constitute the problem.

It is true that the other attempts to explain the Incarnation have been found to be inadequate; and it may seem plausible when it is argued that the futility of the attempted explanations proves that the alleged facts to be explained are in reality not facts at all. This is certainly a short and easy way of disposing of the difficulty. It is indeed sometimes the correct method of solving a troublesome problem, namely, when the alleged troublesome facts can be shown not to be real. But, when there is good evidence of a fact, the fact is not disproved by the inability of men to explain it. We believe that there is an Aurora Borealis, though the cause of it has not been discovered. We believe that dogs and other brutes, when removed from their accustomed haunts, have the ability to find their way back, and that by the most direct route, though it is one which they have had no means of knowing anything about. But no one can tell, or even imagine, how they are able to do it. There are mysteries in abundance in the world; but *they would not be mysteries, if they were not constituted by the undoubted existence of unexplained facts.*

The mystery of the Incarnation is constituted by the concurrence of the two facts: that Jesus was human, and that he was divine. The proof of these, each by itself, is cogent and conclusive; but how they consist with one another, is a mystery. They are facts attested by the clearest evidence—evidence which if we reject, we only create more difficulty and mystery than we avoid. They are facts which for nearly two thousand years have appealed to the deepest and purest yearnings of men. The most intellectual and the most spiritual among them have rested and found peace in the gospel of the Son of God, who "for us and for our salvation" became man, and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

It can hardly be questioned, in short, that the general impression received by the Christian Church from the New Testament has been, and has naturally been, that in Jesus Christ deity and humanity are united, but that the union is to be conceived as that of *God becoming man* rather than that of *man becoming God*. The latter, if clearly asserted, implies an apotheosis, which is essentially a heathenish conception, and which, even if it could be believed, would be of no practical religious avail to mankind in general. That one single man should be thus distinguished, would be of itself little or no help to others. But God coming to the world in human form, manifesting

all the wealth of his redeeming grace in Christ —this is something that appeals to the hearts of sinful men. The incarnation may be inexplicable as a psychological or ontological problem; but it satisfies the yearnings of those who are seeking after God and his righteousness.

There must indeed be no restraint put upon theological research and speculation. If any one can clear up the mysteries that have baffled the keenest intellects of past generations, the elucidation should be heartily welcomed by all. But no satisfactory elucidation can be reached by denying the reality of the facts to be explained. The general consensus of Christian thought and Christian feeling has affirmed that there is ample evidence that Jesus Christ was both God and man. But there is no general consensus as to the question, how deity and humanity could be united in one person. Opinions and conjectures have ranged between the two extremes of Docetism and Humanitarianism. It would have been indeed strange if such a truth as the Incarnation could at once, or even could ever, be comprehended by the limited mind of man. But none the less may the truth be accepted, and become the source of spiritual redemption and peace. Just so electricity has become universally used for practical purposes, and much is known concerning the modes of its manifestations; while yet no one understands what it is, or how it

produces its wonderful effects. And as, in regard to this, men wisely bestow their chief energy and study upon the development of the practical utility of the powerful agent, so, in regard to the person of Christ, the urgent need is to bring men into contact with him to the saving of their souls; while the mystery of his theanthropic personality may be left indefinitely unexplained and uncomprehended. Certain it is that his redemptive power will not be enhanced by so bringing him upon a level with ourselves that no power to redeem is left to him. Let us have breadth enough to accept all the well-attested facts, even though they may seem to be insoluble or mutually contradictory. Let us wait, if need be, for the solution to come in that future time when we shall know even as we have been known (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

At the same time let it be remembered that, however cogent may be the arguments for the dogma in question, mere belief in the dogma is not of itself a distinctively religious act. Though correct belief can never be a matter of utter indifference, it may often be true that a man of heterodox opinions is more truly Christian than another whose orthodoxy is of the strictest sort. If salvation depended upon intellectual ability to understand scientifically the person and the work of Christ, then it would indeed be true that there are few that shall be saved. There is an attitude of soul, sometimes called implicit faith, which is

far more vital than the attitude of mind which is satisfied with merely explicit or scientific belief. Religious faith, or trust, is above all things else a personal relation—the weak, sinful, dependent soul casting itself in humble confidence on divine care and love. Such faith implies of course some conception of the being towards whom it is exercised; but the conception may be a very imperfect and even erroneous one; no one doubts that in the vast majority of cases men's conceptions of the Deity are sadly defective and mistaken. But in spite of this the attitude of the soul towards even the comparatively "unknown God" may be essentially a right and truly religious attitude.

It would be well if this unquestionable truth were more often borne in mind in dealing with the theological question before us. One man may stoutly champion the doctrine of the deity of Christ, and yet may never in his heart of hearts have rendered him homage and trust. Another, for reasons which to him have seemed satisfactory, finds himself unable to assent to the doctrine, but yet may sincerely reverence Jesus as God's Mediator of salvation, and trust in him as a Redeemer from sin. He is troubled with speculative difficulties when asked to assent to the traditional dogmas concerning him; but he feels that still Jesus is an altogether unique being, demanding and deserving adoration, love, and obedience; and he yields himself to him as to his

Master and Saviour. The human side of Jesus appeals to him—the faultless, yet sympathetic and helpful heart of the great High Priest who has been touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He shrinks from an attempt to dogmatize concerning the nature of this being; but he can assent to the Apostolic statement: "There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5).

Now it may be easy for others to see and to say that such a man fails to appreciate those portions of the New Testament which set forth the divine dignity of the Redeemer. It may be obvious to them that there is much more *implied* in his faith than he himself explicitly recognizes. Such uniqueness, such authority, such universality of relation, such spiritual power over men, as this man's faith accords to Jesus, seems to them by a logical necessity to involve an ascription to him of qualities emphatically superhuman—yes, even divine. Moreover, they may be disposed to lay stress on the consideration that the great majority of the most saintly Christians have recognized the divine, as well as the human, side of their Saviour; and they may derive from this an argument for the superior correctness of their Christology. But if the Humanitarian Christian is not convinced by the reasons that seem convincing to them, we can yet take satisfaction in feeling that the *essence* of saving and sanctifying faith—humble and peni-

tent trust in the forgiving love of God as it is revealed and embodied in his Son—is to be found in him as truly as in many another whose intellectual conception of the Redeemer is different and more correct. Let them bear in mind Jesus' rebuke of John, when the latter said, "We saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us" (Mark ix. 38). Let them remember that, if even Paul could exercise no lordship over the faith of the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 24), no more can they assume such a right, but that this brother, however defective his belief may seem to them, is yet to be received as the servant of him whom he, as well as they, acknowledges as Lord, and that "no one can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3).

Yet though an irenic theology requires us to exercise charity and toleration towards all one-sidedness and even vagaries of Christian belief, it does not follow that belief is a matter of indifference. The pursuit of truth is a good; but the chief good is not (as Lessing affirmed) in the pursuit, as distinct from the truth, but in the truth itself. And the whole truth is always better than a half-truth. Correct theories and beliefs do not necessarily produce a correct life; but they are more likely to promote a correct life than superstitions and errors are. Though Christian conduct is more important than orthodox opinions, yet on the whole and in the long run it is only the

truth that makes free (John viii. 32) both from error and from sin. Therefore, in contemplating him who called himself "the Truth," it is well to have a receptive mind for every aspect of his person and his functions, even though the contemplation leads us into mysteries and apparent contradictions. We must expect such when we attempt to comprehend him in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9).[1]

[1] Similar considerations might be presented with respect to the subject of the Trinity. That doctrine was historically an offshoot from that of the Deity of Christ; and the difficulties that beset the one reproduce themselves substantially in the other. The antithesis in the case of Trinitarianism is found in the two opposite tendencies towards tritheism and towards modalism (Sabellianism). A perfect theoretical solution is probably unattainable. It is easy to convict Trinitarians of contradicting one another. The day is not past when it is thought by some to be a sufficient refutation of Trinitarianism to remind the learned theologians of the mathematical truth, that three cannot be one, or one three. Nevertheless the doctrine persists, and, strangely enough, has on the whole been less contested than the other leading doctrines of the Church. But its advocates need not deny or ignore the difficulties which it involves. Instead of attempting to remove these by subtle speculations or questionable analogies, it would be perhaps better to rest in the simple proposition, that, while Father, Son, and Spirit are each divine, they yet constitute but one God.

CHAPTER IX

THE WORK OF REDEMPTION

IN considering the work of redemption we have already (especially in Chapter VI.) noticed the difficulty which arises when we attempt to conceive theoretically the exact relation of human to divine agency in the process of sanctification. In what is commonly called the doctrine of the atonement, however, our attention is more especially directed to the divine side of the work of salvation—to that scheme of grace, reconciliation, expiation, propitiation (or whatever else it may be called), through which God manifests his saving love, and on the ground of which he invites sinners to exercise towards him repentance and faith.

Here, too, however, and here perhaps more than elsewhere, do we meet with variety and contrariety of view. For there emerges here anew the old problem concerning the two natures of Christ, when he is considered as a Redeemer; and this is further complicated by diverse opinions respecting the character of God and the principles by which he is governed in dealing with transgressors.

These diversities have manifested themselves from the earliest times of Christian history, but have been more especially prominent in dogmatic discussions and in confessional statements since the time of Anselm in the eleventh century. And the outstanding fact is that concerning that which is assumed to constitute the most vital part of the Christian systems, concerning which, therefore, we might expect the greatest degree of harmony, we find in fact the greatest diversity—a contention in which some go to the extreme of making a Shibboleth of one particular theory of the atonement, while others go to the other extreme of condemning all attempts to formulate any theory.

Yet it is just with the person and work of Jesus Christ that Christian thought and Christian emotion have the most to do. It is faith in redemption which has produced the warmest and richest hymns of the Church, and has inspired the most eloquent and effective preaching. Unless the Christian Church has in general been the victim of a grave delusion, there must be a profound truth in the doctrine of salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer. This truth it may be difficult, or even impossible, to state accurately or to conceive clearly. It may be that it will always be apprehended by the sensibilities more successfully than by the intellect. But every *truth* which touches the feelings must be one which can be more or less distinctly conceived by the

understanding. And even if the full-orbed truth, in all its splendor, cannot be grasped by the human mind, we may at least be able to make progress in the clearness and correctness of our conceptions by defining and emphasizing that which is most essential in the truth, and by eliminating that which is questionable and unimportant.

This topic, like the one just dealt with, is necessarily to a large extent an exegetical one; for the fact of a special, historical scheme of redemption is not one that can be deduced from mere intuition or reflection. The interpretation of the Scriptural account of the matter must, it is true, be more or less affected by the philosophical and ethical prepossessions of the Christian student. There are nevertheless some propositions respecting which it may be presumed that nearly all must be agreed.

1. It will hardly be questioned that, according to the Scriptures, the main and ultimate end of the work of redemption is the deliverance of men from sin. Salvation involves exemption from punishment; but the topic of escape from the penalty of sin occupies in the Scriptures a small place compared with that of cleansing from the stain of it. The burden of Christ's preaching was a denunciation of wickedness, and an injunction to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. vi. 33). "Ye shall be perfect, as

your heavenly Father is perfect" (v. 48), was the sum of his precepts. And when salvation is connected with faith in Christ, the element of sanctification is never neglected. The classical passage on his redemptive work is John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." But this eternal life itself, which is so often presented as the result or reward of the Christian faith, is not merely exemption from punishment, or some sort of positive external blessing conferred on the believer; it is rather that state of supreme felicity, or fulness of life, which is directly involved in a state of holiness. A state of sin is called a state of death (Eph. ii. 1, 5), while the regenerate man, "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (ver. 10), is one who has been "made alive" (ver. 5); and accordingly it is said of the believer not merely that he shall have, but that he "hath, eternal life" (John iii. 36). The Christian, according to Christ, is one who has been "born anew" (John iii. 3), one who abides in his word (viii. 31) and keeps his commandments (xv. 10). According to Paul, he is one who has put away the old man, and is renewed in the spirit of his mind (Eph. iv. 21–23). According to James, he is one who keeps himself unspotted from the world (James i. 27). According to Peter, he is one who has purified his soul in obedience to the truth (1 Pet. i. 22). Accord-

ing to the Epistle to the Hebrews, he is one who does not sin wilfully (Heb. x. 26). According to John, he is one whom the blood of Christ has cleansed from all sin (1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5).

The redemption wrought through Christ undoubtedly involves deliverance from punitive suffering; but the indispensable condition of such deliverance is the abandonment of the sin itself which merits punishment. Sin is even often declared to be its own punishment—he who sins, to be the slave of sin (John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 16, 20; 2 Pet. ii., 19); sin, to work death (Rom. vii. 13, 24; James i. 15). Sin and salvation are incompatible things. Christ is said to have given himself for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 14). To secure a people pure and zealous of good works—this is here expressly declared to be the end aimed at in the redeeming work of Christ. What God desires mainly is not sinners punished as they deserve, nor sinners exempted from punishment while persisting in sin, but sinners transformed into saints—"a holy nation, a people for God's own possession," who "show forth the excellencies of him who called" them "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9; *cf.* Rom. viii. 29; 2 Cor. iii. 18).

2. It is only a modified form of the preceding proposition, to affirm that, according to the New

Testament, the chief aim of the Christian dispensation is to secure a restoration of the right relation between God and men. That relation is one of ethical harmony and friendship. But a state of sin is a state of "enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7; James iv. 4). The Christian is described as one whose "fellowship is with the Father" (1 John i. 3). He is one whom God loves and abides with (John xiv. 23). He is a *child of God*. This relation of sonship is the one which is especially emphasized. Men are exhorted by Jesus to cherish the spirit of love rather than hate towards their enemies, in order that they may become the sons of their Father who is in heaven (Matt. v. 45). Paul says that it was the mission of Christ to bring men into this intimate filial relation to God: "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). This sonship is a spiritual relation, and exists only when one has the *spirit* of a son: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). "As many as received" the Logos, "to them gave he the right to become children of God" (John i. 12). When men respond to the fatherly love of God as revealed in Christ, they are called children, so that, wondering at the divine grace, they exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath

bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John iii. 1), and yet can be persuaded that nothing in heaven or earth can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. viii. 39). This is the climax of the Christian's faith; this is the glory of his calling.

It is another mode of expressing the same truth, when the object of Christ's mission is said to be to effect a *reconciliation* between God and men. Reconciliation implies a foregoing estrangement—not a mutual estrangement, but an alienation of man from God. The evangelic appeal to men is: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). And the gospel is summed up in the declaration, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (v. 19), and that it was the Father's good pleasure "through him to reconcile all things unto himself" (Col. i. 20; *cf.* Eph. ii. 16); that it is "Jesus Christ through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. v. 11).

In this expression of the object of the gospel stress is laid on the restoration of the normal relation between God and man as the chief thing aimed at. It matters little whether the Greek word implies, as some maintain, that the reconciliation is mutual—that in some sense God also is reconciled or propitiated; for it remains true that the evil to be overcome is one that belongs on the

human side. Man's sinfulness—man's enmity to God—is to be overcome, and replaced by a love responding to that love of God which has never been wanting. Christ, we are told, suffered for our sins, "that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. ii. 24); "he suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (iii. 18). Not God was to be brought to men, but man was to be brought to God.

It is essentially to the same effect, when the work of Christ is represented as securing for men the *forgiveness of sin*. Christ himself speaks of his blood as "poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28; *cf.* Luke xxiv. 47). And Paul says that in Christ "we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. i. 7; Col. i 14). This was largely the burden of the first apostolic preaching (Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; v. 31 ; x. 43 ; xiii. 38; xxvi. 18).

But what is forgiveness? It has often been defined, when exercised by God, as consisting simply in the remission of the just *penalty* of sin. That is, it is conceived as being a merely judicial transaction. And unquestionably the remission of punishment is *involved* in the divine forgiveness. But this cannot be said to be the sole, or even the chief, element in the Biblical conception of forgiveness. The chief element is that of the

divine love exercised towards the penitent sinner.[1] In the Old Testament the *locus classicus* is Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7, where God proclaims himself as "Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Repeatedly is this sentiment echoed in the Old Testament, as, *e. g.*, in Mic. vii. 18: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness." The prominent thought here is not that the sinner is exempted from threatened or deserved punishment, but rather that he is received into the favor of a gracious God. It is the thought which is most graphically portrayed in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which one is not led to think of a judge acquitting a criminal, but only of a father receiving back a repentant son into his loving embrace. The same impression is made when the human duty of forgiveness is enforced by the example of God's forgiveness of men. "Be ye kind one to another," says Paul, "tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 12). When men have occasion to exercise forgiveness, the

[1] See this more fully discussed in D. W. Simon's *Redemption of Man*, Ch. VI.

duty does not consist in releasing from punishment, but simply in cherishing a feeling of love towards a wrong-doer. If God's forgiveness of men were nothing but a judicial act of acquittal, he could not be presented to us as an example to be followed.

Doubtless God is a Judge as well as a Father; and his forgiveness of men is therefore represented as conditioned on human repentance and obedience, while no condition is connected with the human duty of forgiveness. We are to forgive, if we "have aught against any one" (Mark xi. 25), whereas we are told that God forgives only those who themselves forgive other men their trespasses (Matt. vi. 15). But, if this seems like God's asking more from us than he himself is ready to do, the difficulty disappears at once when we reflect that Christ's injunction of the duty of forgiveness is only another form of the previous command that we should love our enemies (Matt. v. 44). This command is enforced by the example of God, who makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust (ver. 45). He therefore exercises the same universal love, including his enemies, which is enjoined upon us. In that sense he forgives all men. But, as a just Ruler, he cannot treat the unrepentant and the unforgiving with the same favor which he bestows on others. Nor, as the universal Father, can he cherish the

same kind of love towards his rebellious creatures which he cherishes towards the dutiful and filial ones. Therefore forgiveness in the full sense—the sense which includes his "not reckoning unto them their transgressions" (2 Cor. v. 19)—God can impart only to his true children. And in their case the real blessedness of the forgiveness consists, not in the fact that God does not punish them as they deserve, but that he "crowneth" them "with lovingkindness and tender mercies" (Ps. ciii. 4); so that the penitent's prayer for pardon culminates in the petition, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing sp rit" (Ps. li. 12).

3. Again, it is an indisputable truth, that, according to the Bib e, the work of redemption orig nated in the love of God the Father. *God* so loved the world that *he gave* his Son. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. iv. 4). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). In these and other equally explicit statements (such as Rom. v. 8; viii. 39; Eph. i. 3–6; ii. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 John iii. 1; iv. 14; v. 11; 1 Pet. i. 3; Tit. iii. 4–6; James i. 17, 18) Christ's Apostles declare that the initiation of the work of salvation is to be found in the love of the Father. The same is abundantly testified by Christ himself, especially in the Fourth Gospel, where he uniformly speaks

of himself as *sent* by God (iii. 17, 34; v. 36, 38; vi. 29, 38, 57; vii. 29; viii. 16, 42; x. 36; xi. 42; xiii. 20; xvii. 3, 8, 18, 21–25; xx. 21), and the work which he does as being God's work. He goes so far as to say that he does nothing of himself (v. 19, 30; viii. 28; xii. 49; xiv. 10), but that his whole mission consists in a perfect execution of the will of God (iv. 34; v. 36; vi. 38; vii. 16–18; viii. 26, 29, 38, 50, 54; ix. 3, 4; x. 18, 32, 37, 38; xii. 49; xiv. 24, 31; xv. 15; xvii. 4, 8).

4. Another indisputable truth, involved in the foregoing, is that the work of salvation was somehow effected through Jesus Christ. He is sometimes called the Mediator between God and men: "There is one God, one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5; *cf.* Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24). A kindred notion is expressed when Christ is represented as making intercession for his followers (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25). In general, his self-sacrifice is declared to be the means of bringing men to God (1 Pet. iii. 18). He is also said to be the one through whom we have redemption and forgiveness (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Rom. iii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 18, 19).

But this mediation is certainly not the work of an intermediary who intervenes between two mutually hostile parties that would, but for this intervention, remain mutually irreconcilable. God and men are not mutually estranged; the es-

trangement is only on the human side. It is no case for an umpire or arbitrator, whose business is to determine what is wrong on either side, and to decide what concessions each party must make in order to the restoration of friendship. There is no wrong on God's part to be rectified. So far from needing a third party to intervene in order to bring him into right relations towards men, he himself *takes the initiative* in doing what can be done for the purpose of putting an end to the estrangement. Christ does not stand midway between the two parties, representing them both equally; he is rather an ambassador sent by one of the parties to summon the other to surrender, and offering the most generous conditions in case of compliance. Christ is a mediator, in short, only in the sense that he is the *medium* through which especially God reveals himself and his will —the one who *mediates* the divine purpose and work of salvation.

The notion has indeed sometimes prevailed, that the Father himself needed to be appeased, and has been appeased by the redeeming work of the Son. To which it is to be replied that it was the love of the Father towards men which instituted that redeeming work. If it is said nevertheless that we are told of Christ's having been a "propitiation" for our sins, and that this must mean that God was propitiated, or placated, by him, it need only be remarked that, wherever this

term is used, it is distinctly stated or implied that the *Father himself provided* this propitiation (Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ii. 17; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10). A God who takes such pains, and makes such elaborate provisions, to bring about a relation of friendship between himself and his enemies, certainly has no need of being appeased.

That Christ is not a mediator in the ordinary and proper sense of the word, appears further in the remarkable fact that he does not effect the reconciliation once for all, and then drop comparatively out of sight and thought. Instead of that, just by virtue of his mediation he takes a rank practically and permanently co-ordinate with that of God himself in his relation to the redeemed. He becomes himself the object of their trust and supreme love (John iii. 36; Gal. ii. 20; 1 Pet. i. 8, etc.). He is one whom Christians are to serve (Col. iii. 24; Rom. i. 1; xiv. 18; xvi. 18; Phil. i. 1). He is called our Lord. This word, though it sometimes has the lower meaning of "Sir" or "Master," yet generally in the New Testament, when it is used of Christ (as it ordinarily is, even when not expressly limited to him), designates him as a Sovereign. Thus we read, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8). Accordingly the Christian Church is called indiscriminately the Church of God (1 Cor. i. 2; x. 32;

Gal. i. 13, etc.) and the Church of Christ (Matt. xvi. 18; Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. v. 24, etc.). And in general, as already shown in Chapter VII, the functions of the Father and of the Son in relation to Christians are throughout the New Testament strikingly blended and identified. And what is true of the New Testament writers is equally true of Christians of succeeding ages. From the beginning (*cf.* 2 Cor. xii. 8) prayer has been offered to Jesus as well as to the Father. In the hymns of the Church the Redeemer is not only directly addressed, but is perhaps more frequently addressed, than the Father himself. He is adored as a Divine King; he is loved as a Divine Friend; he is followed as a Divine Exemplar.

Respecting the foregoing propositions there is general agreement. Divergence becomes more marked when a more scientific and theoretical statement of the scheme of salvation is attempted. Some would deprecate any attempt to theorize on this subject. They would leave it where the New Testament leaves it, not set forth in a dogmatic form, but in the fresh, free, fervent, informal, apparently even inconsistent, yet practically edifying, form in which it found expression in Jesus and his immediate followers. It is, however, impossible altogether to refrain from the tendency to philosophize. This impulse has asserted itself more

or less from the earliest times. An attempt to avoid it now must inevitably result in the formation of a new dogma—less elaborate, more vague and more brief, than those of the great creeds of the Church, but still a new statement of Christian belief;—just as various attempts to overcome sectarianism in the Church by communities calling themselves simply Christians, Christian Brethren, Disciples of Christ, etc., result in fact in the creation of so many more sects. A better course is to seek for and to emphasize what is common and fundamental in the various divergent statements of belief; to trace out the causes of the divergence, but in doing so to avoid all theological rancor; and, while aiming after more accurate and adequate statements of the great truths of the gospel, to recognize that after all the vital thing is the exercise of humble love and trust towards God in Christ rather than the attainment of a full and faultless theoretical conception of Christian doctrine.

It was to be expected that divergent doctrinal views concerning the work of redemption would be largely determined by antithetical views concerning the person of Christ. According as his humanity, on the one hand, or his deity, on the other, is emphasized, will theories of the atonement vary from one another. A Socinian cannot in this respect but differ from a Docetist or a Sabellian. But, in addition to this, there is a

still more fruitful cause of diversification—antithetical views respecting those divine attributes which are especially concerned in the work of salvation: according to some the dominant attribute is love; according to others it is justice. These two causes of variation do not run in parallel lines, but cross one another; so that a very considerable variety results. For of course the interpretation of Biblical statements concerning the work of redemption is very largely affected by an antecedent bias determined by differing views respecting these other doctrines. In dealing with this vexed question, however, it should be our aim to emphasize the points of agreement rather than the points of difference, and to point out, so far as possible, the direction in which a still greater degree of harmony is to be looked for.

I. The first antithesis grows directly out of the opposite views concerning the person of Christ. According as his humanity or his deity is emphasized, there result antithetic conceptions of his part in the work of redemption. Some make his whole work consist in the influence of his human teaching and example, while others go to the opposite extreme of minimizing this feature of his mission. They deprecate holding him up as an example. They would rather lay stress on that feature of his mission in which his example cannot be followed. But this is surely one-sided. Jesus

was a man, and he was a teacher. "Teacher" [1] in fact was the title by which his followers most frequently designated him. As a teacher he spoke with a peculiar authority, and insisted upon obedience as a test of true discipleship (John xiv. 15). It is therefore clearly a mistake to make little of this aspect of his earthly mission; rather it should be magnified. Not, however, by seeking to prove that his precepts were something absolutely new and original. He found his greatest commandment in the Mosaic law (Matt. xxii. 36–40; *cf.* Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18). His choicest ethical sentiments and precepts had been for substance anticipated, not only by the Hebrew prophets, but also by the moralists of heathen nations. He appealed to the moral instincts which are inherent in human nature—instincts which are largely perverted, often only latent, but which can be aroused, clarified, and quickened by one who is able clearly to grasp and pungently to state what is only dimly felt by the moral sense of ordinary men. This is what Jesus did. If his precepts and maxims had been something absolutely new, he would have appealed to absolutely unresponsive hearts, so that his lessons would have been absolutely useless.

Wherein, then, did Jesus excel other expounders of the moral law? Simply in his superior ability

[1] Commonly, but inaccurately, rendered "Master" in the A. V.

clearly to grasp and pungently to state what is most vital and essential in that law. What in other teachers had been as wheat mixed with much chaff was in him winnowed truth. What in others had been as stars sparkling in nocturnal gloom he concentrated into a blazing sun. What others had laboriously tried to evolve in a philosophical form he stated in the simplest language, fitted to be grasped by the common mind. He had an unexampled skill in appealing to that which is truest and best in the human conscience —in exposing the self-deception and hypocrisy of the human heart, and in awakening men to purer moral purposes.

It is a great mistake when Christians, in their effort to exalt the redemptive mission of their Master, are tempted to lay little or no stress on the importance of Christ's ethical teachings as a part of his work of salvation. For manifestly there can be no effectual deliverance from sin unless there is a geniune *consciousness* of sin on the part of the one who is to be delivered. The creation of this consciousness is an essential prerequisite. And the beginning of the Saviour's work was therefore the preaching of a righteousness superior to that of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. v. 20).[1] He exposed, as no one had ever exposed before, the folly and futility of formalism.

[1] For a full and forcible development of this point, see Bushnell's *Vicarious Sacrifice*, Part III., Chap. V.

He forced the attention of men to the essentially *spiritual* nature of sin and holiness. In contrast with those varying notions of right and wrong which are determined by current external fashions and customs, he laid down the simple law of love as constituting the essence of holiness, and the absence of love as the essence of sin. Thus, as with thunder tones, he aroused the consciences that had been sleeping in the repose of selfishness and self-complacency. Not till this was done could men be led to cry in earnest, "What shall we do to be saved?"

But the best of precepts may be largely or wholly neutralized by a bad example. Jesus enforced the language of his lips by the language of his life. He asked no one to do what he was unwilling to do himself. If he enjoined upon others perseverance in right doing and right feeling even at the risk of persecution and death, he proved the sincerity of his convictions by himself "becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8; *cf.* Heb. v. 8; John x. 18). He so exemplified his commands by his conduct that he could boldly say to his enemies, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John viii. 46); and the teachers who followed him, when they exhorted their fellow-Christians to lay aside every weight and their easily besetting sins, could represent him as the goal to which they were to look forward (Heb. xii. 1, 2)—a goal so far beyond us

that, though the best of us may in this life not expect fully to reach it (Phil. iii. 12), every one should so make it his aim that he may say, "I press on *toward* the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (ver. 14).

But while it is right and important thus to recognize and emphasize the fact that Christ was a real man, and, as such, taught and enforced the moral law, it is not right to overlook the fact that, according to the New Testament, he was more than a mere man, and more than a mere teacher. He is called a "Saviour" also; and not only does he share this title with God the Father, but in general, as we have already seen, all the functions of the Father in his relation to the redemption of men are freely and constantly ascribed to the Son also. Perfectly analogous to those passages which speak of the Son's relation to the divine work of creation are those which deal with his relation to the work of redemption. Here too we find this same alternation—Christ sometimes described as delivering us from sin and its penalty by his own independent power; at other times as simply the one through whom God the Father effects this deliverance. But the point to be especially noted is that, though he is thus pictured as an agent or instrument of God in the work of salvation, he is yet not conceived as a mere irresponsible medium. On the contrary, co-equally with the Father, he is everywhere represented as

entitled to the glory of the work and to the gratitude and service of the redeemed. This is the striking and characteristic feature of the apostolic conception of Jesus as Saviour—that he is put practically on a par with the Father. Redemption is ascribed to the love of Christ as the originating cause of it (Gal. ii. 20), and to the grace of Christ as the constant promoter of the work (2 Cor. xii. 9), just as the same is ascribed to the love and grace of God (John iii. 16; Eph. ii. 8). He is called "the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. xii. 2).

This indiscriminate way in which the Father and the Son are in the New Testament spoken of as the object of the Christian's trust, may to a superficial reader seem to be an evidence only of looseness of conception. But there is a consistency and persistency in the Scriptural view which cannot so easily be set aside. The fact is, not that one writer presents one conception, and another the other; nor even that the same writer capriciously wavers between the two. Rather, the functions of the Father and of the Son are deliberately blended and even identified. After Paul has asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of *Christ?*" (Rom. viii. 35) he concludes by expressing the most confident assurance that nothing in heaven or earth "shall be able to separate us from the love of *God*, which is *in Christ Jesus* our Lord" (ver. 39). What is at first called

the love of Christ is immediately afterwards called the love of God; but it is the love of God *in* Christ. Just so (in ver. 9) what at one moment is called the Spirit of God is at the next called the Spirit of Christ. And, with a closer reference to the work of redemption, we read (in 2 Cor. v. 19) that "God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto himself." It was a work "which he wrought in Christ" (Eph. i. 20).

The work of redemption can as little as that of creation be conceived as devolved by God upon any created being, or as divided between him and such a being. And neither of these crude conceptions can be legitimately derived from the Biblical teaching. The work is a divine one, and cannot be executed by any finite substitute, acting as a mere mechanical instrument. What Isaiah gives as the divine doctrine remains eternally true: "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour" (Isa. xliii. 11; *cf.* xlv. 21; Hos. xiii. 4).[1] When Christ is called the Saviour in the New Testament, his redeeming work is not conceived as that of a finite, human being, distinct from

[1] An intelligent lady, who had been taught to regard Jesus as the Saviour, but not as divine, once told me that this passage had convinced her of his deity: If Jesus is Saviour, and none but Jehovah can be Saviour, then Jesus and Jehovah must be one. If it should be objected that Isaiah speaks of salvation in the lower sense of national deliverance, it may be replied that what is true of that must *a fortiori* be true of the deliverance from sin.

God, but that of one in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9); it is still the work of the divine Father, wrought in or through the divine Son—the two mysteriously one—"*God in Christ* reconciling the world unto himself."

Thus we see that the same problem which confronts us when we consider Christ's essential nature meets us here, where we consider his agency in the work of redemption. And the only solution of the problem is to recognize the truth that, as he is in his nature both human and divine, so in his capacity as Saviour he is also both human and divine. The data before us do not warrant the denial of either factor, however great may be the difficulty or the mystery involved in conceiving of the two as united.

II. The other source of variation in doctrinal conceptions of the work of redemption lies in antithetical views respecting the Divine attributes particularly concerned in that work. It is from this source that the principal differences arise. We are here especially brought into contact with what are ordinarily called the theories of the atonement. The general antithesis is this: According to some the supreme, imperial attribute of God is justice; according to others it is love. Some say, "God may be merciful, but he must be just." The others say, "God may be just, but he must be merciful." Consequently it is contended

on the one side that God cannot forgive sinners, unless the punishment deserved by them can be inflicted on an innocent substitute; it is contended on the other side that God can forgive sin sovereignly on condition of repentance, without such infliction. On either side there are minor variations, giving rise to a number of theories; but these are the two general classes, sharply distinguished from one another. The first are most commonly called Satisfaction theories; the others, Moral, or Moral Influence, theories. These latter terms are somewhat infelicitous, inasmuch as all hold that the work of redemption is fitted to exert a moral influence upon men. Moreover, the Satisfactionist, although he magnifies justice as the attribute that must be satisfied, yet himself holds that it is the divine love which provides the way by which that satisfaction is secured. And since both parties believe in the sanctity of both these attributes, it might seem as if there need after all be no controversy. All agree that sinners are forgiven and saved through the divine love manifested in the life and death of Jesus Christ. The Satisfactionist claims that according to his view the divine love gains its end without any sacrifice of the divine justice, and objects to the opposite doctrine, that it implies that this justice is defeated and dishonored. Why, then, should not the Satisfaction doctrine be generally acceptable? The question requires a closer consideration.

The more rigid Satisfaction theory of the atonement has assumed different phases, stress being especially laid now on the vicarious sufferings of Christ, now on his vicarious obedience, now on both (so most frequently); but in any case the point insisted on is that Christ acted as a strict *substitute*—that his sufferings were strictly *penal*, laid upon him instead of being inflicted on the sinner, and thus exempting God from the necessity of punishing the sinner as he deserves.

Now the objection urged by the Anti-satisfactionist (if I may coin such a term) is that such a transfer of punishment from the guilty to the innocent is unthinkable and impossible; and even if it were thinkable and possible, he holds that such a transfer, instead of satisfying justice, would be a gross injustice. It certainly seems to be an ethical axiom, that sin, and the ill-desert resulting from sin, belong only to the person sinning, and can no more be carried over to another person than the whole character and personality of one man can be suddenly and arbitrarily bestowed on another.

A certain plausibility is given to the Satisfaction doctrine, when obedience to God is portrayed under the figure of a *debt*. This figure is one which is largely employed by Anselm in his exposition of the necessity of a vicarious satisfaction. If A owes B a sum of money, but is unable to pay it, B may be satisfied if a third person offers to

pay the debt. But if A has insulted or physically abused B, there is no justice and no satisfaction in making a third person suffer for the wrong. And sin against God is unquestionably more analogous to such a personal wrong or insult than it is to a pecuniary debt. Even in the case of a debt strict justice is not secured by a vicarious payment. The *right* thing is that a debtor should pay his *own* debts. The creditor may consent to take a third person's money; but it is not his sense of justice, but only his pocket, that is really satisfied. Much more obvious is it that, when not an outward and material obligation is concerned, but a state of the heart—inward guilt,—no man can repent of a sin which he has not committed, or wipe out the guilt which another man has contracted, or be justly punished for another's crime. An angry mob, eager to avenge a crime, sometimes vents its rage upon an innocent man instead of the guilty one, and in doing so may even derive a savage satisfaction from the assurance that *somebody* has suffered, if not the guilty person. But no one can soberly hold that there is any satisfaction of justice in such a substitution. Little better is it when an innocent man *voluntarily* suffers punishment in lieu of the guilty one. Such an act of self-sacrifice might be called generous and even heroic; but there is no *justice* in it. And as for a magistrate who is willing deliberately and in cold blood to inflict the penalty of the law

upon an innocent man, it can only be said that he is worse than the angry mob; for the mob commits an injustice unintentionally, while the magistrate commits it of set purpose. Nothing can be more obvious than that the general adoption of such a method of executing justice in a civil commonwealth, even if the voluntary substitutes could be found, would practically result in giving general license to crime.

All this must seem indisputable, when ordinary human jurisprudence is considered; and indeed the Satisfactionists make no pretense that a system of vicarious punishment ever has been, or ever could be, resorted to by any form of human government. An attempt to do so could only result in subverting law and justice and all social order. It seems strange, therefore, that a method of dealing with guilt which, applied to human relations, would be confessedly unjust and disastrous, can be affirmed to be in the divine government a shining display of exact justice.

Again, the inadequacy of this theory is virtually conceded by its advocates, when they say that the atonement is after all not available for all sinners, but only for those who repent and believe. It is of course obvious that to offer salvation, on the ground of the atonement, to all sinners unconditionally, would be like granting amnesty to rebels while they are still in arms. This would mean a practical abdication of au-

thority on the part of the Moral Ruler—a surrender of all that moral government is for. To hold that repentance is the indispensable condition of forgiveness is a confession that what really makes it *safe* to offer forgiveness is not the fact that a vicarious punishment has been inflicted on Christ, but that the sinner abandons his evil ways. The doctrine, as usually stated, is that even repentance, though an indispensable condition of receiving the divine pardon, yet does not render satisfaction for past sins, so that an atonement is necessary in order to justify a free forgiveness. But in this case the only logical form of the doctrine is that of an atonement limited to the penitent, or (as otherwise put) to the elect. Yet now-a-days few even of the strictest Satisfactionists venture to hold the doctrine in this form. But, failing to do so, they involve themselves in a grave self-contradiction.

For when they declare that Christ's sufferings were adequate to atone for all the sins of the world, while yet not all sinners are saved, they virtually assert that, though Christ satisfied the divine justice with reference to all sinners, yet, in the case of many, God executes his justice directly upon the sinner also, so that there is a double penalty for the same guilt.[1] The distinction

[1] Prof. Shedd's reply to this objection (*Dogm. Theol.*, ii., p. 444) is a curiosity of logic: "This is a mathematical objection, and must receive a mathematical answer. The alleged

which is made between the *sufficiency* and the *efficiency* of Christ's sufferings does not remove the difficulty. Making this distinction, Dr. Hodge says:

> Christ . . . did not die equally for all men. He laid down his life for his sheep; he gave himself for his Church. But in perfect consistency with all this, he did all that was necessary, so far as a satisfaction of justice is concerned, all that is required, for the salvation of all men.[1]

But elsewhere he says[2]:

> The work of Christ . . . had an inherent worth which rendered it a perfect satisfaction, so that justice has no further demands. It is here as in the case of state criminals. If such an offender suffers the penalty which the law prescribes as the punishment of his offense, he is no longer liable to condemnation. . . . This is what is called the perfection of Christ's satisfaction. It perfectly, from its own intrinsic worth, satisfies the demands of justice.

excess in the case is like the addition of a finite number to infinity, which is no increase. The everlasting suffering of all mankind, and still more of only a part, is a *finite* suffering. . . . But the suffering of the God-man is mathematically infinite, because his person is absolutely infinite. When, therefore, any amount of finite human suffering is added to the infinite suffering of the God-man, it is no increase of value." Comment on this is needless.

[1] *Syst. Theol.*, ii., p. 556.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 482.

The analogy of state criminals, here adduced, is without point, unless the penal sufferings of Christ, being "sufficient for all sinners," do in reality make them *all* "no longer liable to condemnation." But when it is said in the same breath that Christ's death "perfectly satisfies the demands of justice," and yet that God is not satisfied, but visits punishment on the impenitent besides, there is no escape from the inference that, according to this doctrine, a double punishment is inflicted for the same offense.

When now, in addition to this, it is alleged that Christ not only *suffered* enough to atone for the sins of all men, but also rendered vicarious *obedience* for them, the difficulty is still further aggravated. The sufferings, by themselves, we are told, rendered a "perfect satisfaction, so that justice has no further demands." But even a "perfect" satisfaction is not enough; and so *another* perfect satisfaction is secured by Christ's perfect obedience of the divine law, so that for *all* the sins of the world a *double* satisfaction is furnished. Yet even this does not suffice for the deliverance of all.—Then we also have here the inadmissible notion of works of supererogation. While Christ did not *deserve* to suffer at all, so that *all* his *sufferings* can be imputed to sinners, he was, as a moral being, under obligation to obey the law for himself. But, it is asserted, "only a man's obedience, and not that of a God-man,

could be required of a man. Consequently this *Divine-Human* obedience and suffering was a surplusage in respect to the man Christ Jesus, and might overflow and inure to the benefit of a third party." [1] But surely the notion that one person can be *too good*—better than he needs to be—and that therefore his goodness can spill over, and be imputed to another who is not good enough, ought by this time to be antiquated.

This theory of vicarious satisfaction, therefore, conflicts on every side with the enlightened moral instincts of men. It is a kind of satisfaction which fails to satisfy.

Pressed by the weight of these objections to the strict Anselmic theory of the atonement, Grotius and others resort to a modification of the Satisfaction doctrine. Christ, they say, could not indeed in any exact sense endure *penal* suffering; but, though innocent, he did suffer for the benefit of sinners; and this fact is explained by saying that his sufferings, though not strictly penal, were yet designed as an *exhibition* of God's displeasure towards sin; they made it consistent with the honor of the divine moral government that repentant sinners should be pardoned. In a loose sense, therefore, Christ, we are told, may be said to have suffered punishment, or to have satisfied the law. God is here viewed predominantly as

[1] Shedd, *Hist. of Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii., p. 280, approvingly stating Anselm's doctrine.

the Governor of the universe, who restrains his benevolent impulse freely to pardon all men, or at least all penitent men, only because such a free pardon would cast a slight on the sanctity of the divine commandments. But, it is alleged, through the sufferings of Christ "it pleased Jehovah, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify the law and make it honorable" (Isa. xlii. 21).

This theory has the advantage over the other, that it avoids the objectionable assumption that guilt, or obligation to suffer punishment for guilt, can be transferred from a guilty to an innocent person. But it may still be objected that it would be unjust to inflict *any* suffering, even though not penal and vicarious suffering, upon an innocent person, even for the benefit of the guilty or for the public good. Indeed it may be urged that this Governmental theory is, even from a juridical point of view, less acceptable than the Anselmic. For the latter aims at least to safeguard exact divine justice; the other does not pretend to do that; while both are liable to the charge that they represent the Father as unjustly inflicting vicarious sufferings on the Son.

But a further objection to this Governmental doctrine is that the divine abhorrence of sin which, it is alleged, is expressed by Christ's death, is not thus expressed at all, if we adopt the fundamental proposition of the doctrine, that that death was in no proper sense penal. Abhorrence

of sin may indeed be expressed by justly punishing the sinner; but putting to death a sinless man, if it expresses abhorrence towards anything, must express abhorrence of sinlessness. It is only when the strictly penal and vicarious character of Christ's death, which was at first emphatically denied, is covertly reintroduced, that the theory has any plausibility at all.

Furthermore, it is very obvious that, according to the New Testament, the sufferings and death of Christ are in some way closely related, as cause or condition, to the forgiveness of sin. He is the one "in whom we have our redemption through his blood" (Eph. i. 7; *cf.* Col. i. 14; Rev. v. 9; Heb. ix. 12–14; Luke xxiv. 46, 47, etc.). If it can be held that the blood of Christ was *judicially* shed, as a real vicarious satisfaction for the guilt of sinners, then one can see some direct connection between his death and God's forgiveness of sin. But if this view of his death is rejected, then it does not appear how the mere imposition of suffering upon an innocent person in any way opens the way for God to forgive the guilty. Torturing a good man furnishes a very poor indication of willingness to forgive a bad man. Here again such indication can be found only when the Redeemer's sufferings are virtually, though not avowedly, regarded as really vicarious, and so a real satisfaction of divine justice. Indeed the advocates of the Governmental theory of the atonement are

generally quite unwilling to abandon the term "vicarious" in the stating of their doctrine, and sometimes wax morally indignant when that term is adopted by the advocates of the Moral theory; though it is evident that neither the one nor the other can apply it to the death of Christ except in a very different sense from the traditional one.

The two forms of the Satisfaction doctrine which have been considered are due in some measure to a difference of view concerning the relation of the divine love to the divine justice. Another difference, not parallel to this one, gives rise to variations in both these forms alike. I refer to the relative emphasis laid in either case on the deity and the humanity of Christ in his capacity as Mediator. Whether his death is regarded as strictly penal, or is regarded more according to the *acceptilatio* doctrine of Duns Scotus, in either case it makes a very considerable difference whether Jesus is conceived to have suffered as truly divine, or only as human. Logically the stricter form of the Satisfaction theory should strongly incline one to regard the sufferings as those of a divine being. For surely it is clear that no human being could by his self-sacrifice fully atone for the sins of all mankind. Yet on the other hand the inveterate notion that the Deity cannot suffer interferes with the natural course of logic; so that, while it is still insisted that Christ

endured what was equivalent to all that human guilt deserved, it is yet held that his sufferings were, strictly speaking, merely human. And so there has to be made a tortuous effort to find an *infinite* value in *finite* suffering. It seems no easy task to make out that the sufferings of a single man, limited to a comparatively short period, were enough to outweigh those which were deserved by the whole human race. The device commonly resorted to is to say that the human sufferings acquired an infinite value because of the union of deity and humanity in the one person, though only the humanity suffered. But this is a subtlety hardly worthy of serious refutation; it is somewhat like alleging that the value of a dollar is greatly enhanced by being carried in a very good man's pocket.[1]

[1] This judgment may seem flippant or supercilious, when it is considered how widespread the notion in question has been. But the best statement of it fails to meet the objection. Dr. Hodge, for example (*Syst. Theology*, vol. ii., p. 483), says of Christ: "His obedience and sufferings were . . . the obedience and sufferings of a divine person. This does not imply . . . that the divine nature itself suffered. . . . Christ is but one person, with two distinct natures, and therefore whatever can be predicated of either nature may be predicated of the person. An indignity offered to a man's body is offered to himself. If this principle be not correct, there was no greater crime in the crucifixion of Christ than in unjustly inflicting death on an ordinary man." It is true that an injury done to a person's body is done to himself. And an assault on a king is a greater crime than an assault on an ordinary man. But is the *bodily* pain any

The same entanglement besets the Grotian theory. An infinite suffering is as much needed in order to *exhibit* or picture the guilt of mankind, as it is in order to atone for it. When, therefore, the theory is held in conjunction with the doctrine of the divine impassibility, there has to be an effort, very unsatisfactory indeed, to make out that somehow the sufferings of Jesus, though in fact only human, yet were sufficient, by virtue of his peculiar relation to the Father, to answer the purpose of honoring the divine law. The vague allegation that those sufferings were sufficient to accomplish this end, though they were confessedly vastly less than the sins of the human race deserve, only aggravates a difficulty already great enough. If it is hard to see how the infliction of suffering on an innocent being, though

greater in the one case than in the other? The analogy adduced only goes to show that the dignity of the person assaulted enhances the *guilt* of the *assailant;* what is needed, in order to the validity of the argument, is to show that the *suffering* of the one assaulted is enhanced by his *dignity.* The "perfection of the satisfaction of Christ," Hodge says (*ibid.*), is due "principally to the infinite dignity of his person." What gives the infinite dignity is of course the deity of his person. But the deity, we are told, did not suffer at all; only the humanity suffered. But in that case there is nothing "infinite" in the suffering; and it is only by a logical jugglery that it is inferred that the suffering has an infinite value. It is strange that theologians have so long been satisfied with such a view, especially when it is considered that the notion of the divine impassibility is itself utterly unscriptural.

divine, can express God's love of justice, it is harder still to see how this is done when the sufferer is less than divine.

It is more consistent, and more nearly satisfactory, when the exponents of the Satisfaction doctrine distinctly maintain that Deity itself suffered in making the atonement. Thus Dr. Shedd says: "The Divine impassibility means that the Divine nature cannot be caused to suffer from any *external* cause. . . . But it does not follow that God cannot *himself* do an act which he feels to be a sacrifice of feeling and affection, and in so far an inward suffering."[1] And again: "God propitiates, appeases, satisfies, and reconciles God. . . He is therefore both *active* and *passive*, both *agent* and *patient*. . . . God is the one who holds man in a righteous captivity, and he is the one who pays the ransom that frees him from it."[2] This is certainly less objectionable than the view just considered, though of course it still does not appear how any punishment but that of the criminal himself, even

[1] *Dogm. Theol.*, vol. ii., p. 387.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 399. Akin to this, yet different, is the view of Dr. A. H. Strong, called by him the Ethical Theory (*System. Theol.*, pp. 409 *ff.*). He seeks to retain the element of penal suffering, but undertakes to show "how the innocent can justly suffer for the guilty," and finds "the solution of the problem . . . in Christ's union with humanity." Christ, he says, by his birth from the Virgin, was purged from depravity; "but this purging away of depravity did not take away guilt, or penalty. There was still left the just exposure

though the one punished be the holy Sovereign who makes the law, can really satisfy the strict demands of retributive justice.

to the penalty of violated law. . . . He might have declined to join himself to humanity, and then he need not have suffered. . . . But once . . . possessed of the human nature that was under the curse, he was bound to suffer." This is Augustinian Realism, one-sidedly applied to human guilt, but not to human sin. The theory is bad enough when sin and guilt are united; but how could Christ be guilty without being sinful? When further Dr. S. tells us that "the whole mass and weight of God's displeasure against the race fell on him, when once he became a member of the race," this, like the previous proposition, can only be said to be an assertion without proof. He refers indeed to 2 Cor. v. 21, where Christ is said to have been "made to be sin on our behalf"; but this, taken strictly, would prove Christ to have been *sinful;* but neither this nor any other passage of Scripture warrants us in affirming that the Father's *wrath* ever rested on the Son—his evermore "beloved Son."

CHAPTER X

THE WORK OF REDEMPTION (CONTINUED)

WHEN we consider the serious difficulties which beset the Satisfaction theory of the atonement, it cannot but be wondered at that it has been so long and so widely accepted. That it has had so extensive a currency, is a fact which at least requires some explanation. Two things serve sufficiently to account for the fact.

First, the confusion of the notion of *guilt* with that of *debt* has made the doctrine more acceptable than it ever could have been but for this confusion. This conception of the death of Christ as the payment of a debt plays a large part in the patristic doctrine, that redemption consisted in the deliverance of man from the power of Satan. The Saviour's sufferings were conceived as a ransom paid to the devil, who had a right to hold men in thralldom until his claims were otherwise satisfied. It was a manifest improvement when the notion gained ground that God, and not Satan, was the one who needed to be satisfied. But the very fact that minds so acute as those of Irenæus and Origen could think

of redemption as a commercial transaction between God and the devil, and even go so far as to intimate that Satan was outwitted by a cunning deception, exhibits a crudeness of conception respecting morals and justice such that an enlightened and adequate theory could hardly be expected from a Church of which they were leading lights. When, later, men like Athanasius dropped the notion that Satan was the creditor in the case, and laid stress rather on the divine justice as that which needed to be satisfied, this misleading conception of the payment of a debt still played a part, and, as already remarked, is found also in Anselm's great treatise, *Cur Deus Homo*, which was so influential in shaping subsequent opinions on the atonement. And though the inadequacy of the parallel between pecuniary indebtedness and moral guilt is seen and acknowledged by many modern Satisfactionists, yet that parallel has undoubtedly had much to do in familiarizing the minds of men with the idea that the penalty due to guilt—even if not the guilt itself—can be transferred from one person to another.

The other fact which has greatly helped to give currency to the Satisfaction theory, is that many of the Biblical statements concerning the death of Christ can be plausibly adduced in its favor. It certainly is very obvious that a peculiar prominence is given to this event in the New Testa-

ment Scriptures. The emphasis laid on the death of Christ in the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John cannot escape even a superficial reader. "Christ crucified" Paul declares to be his great theme (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2; xv. 3; Gal. vi. 14). A transcendent value is attached to Christ's death (*e. g.*, 1 Cor. v. 7; xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 14; Rom. vi. 3; viii. 34; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 1 John iii. 16; Heb. ii. 9; vii. 27; ix. 28, etc.), or to his blood (*e. g.*, Acts xx. 28; Rom. iii. 25; Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19; 1 John i. 7; Rev. vii. 14, etc.) as procuring our redemption. His sufferings in general are also similarly spoken of (Phil. ii. 7, 8; Col. i. 24; Heb. ii. 10, 18; iv. 15). Now whether or not it is possible to ascertain precisely how the apostles conceived the connection of Christ's sufferings and death with our salvation, the fact that they do lay great stress on it must be admitted, and taken into account.

We should naturally expect more frequent reference to the death of Christ to be made by his followers after the event itself than by himself before it. Indeed we do not naturally expect any one during his lifetime to speak much of his death—still less to make specific predictions concerning it, and less still, to characterize it as of great consequence to the world. This, however, according to the Evangelists, is what Jesus did. Not only in John's Gospel is he said to declare that he was to lay down his life for his sheep (John

x. 11, 15; *cf.* iii. 14; vi. 51; viii. 28; xii. 7, 32); in the Synoptists we find this intimation still more distinctly given. We are informed that he repeatedly told his disciples that he "must suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed" (Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22, 23; xx. 17–19; *cf.* Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22; Mark ix. 31; Luke ix. 44; Mark x. 33, 34; Luke xviii. 32, 33). This anticipated suffering he called his "cup" and his "baptism" (Mark x. 38), and looked forward to it with an awful dread: "I have a baptism to be baptized with," he said, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) He foretold his passion again in connection with his transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 12; Mark ix. 12; Luke ix. 44); and when the time of his crucifixion drew near, though he had affirmed the necessity of his suffering, yet his anticipation of it was so vivid and acute that he could not refrain from praying that the cup might pass from him (Matt. xxvi. 39).

It may be said that these forebodings and intimations of Jesus respecting a tragic end of his life can easily be accounted for by the circumstances in which he found himself. Knowing how decidedly he had come into collision with the prejudices of the dominant classes among the Jews, yet conscientiously unable to make his teachings conform to those prejudices, he could foresee that sooner or later he would become the

victim of priestly malignity. This is doubtless true. Any man of such incorruptible uprightness and fearless devotion to duty might under such conditions have anticipated a death of violence. But not every one would say so much about it as Jesus did; and no one else, like him, has ever pronounced his death to be of vital and beneficent consequence to the world. This is the striking and peculiar feature in what he said concerning his decease—that he was to lay down his life for the benefit of his followers (John x. 15), yes, for the benefit of the world. The Son of man, he told his disciples, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). His blood was to be "poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28). And after his resurrection he impressed upon his disciples the necessity of his death, saying, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 46, 47). In such utterances Jesus laid the foundation for that doctrine of the redemptive nature of his death which is so conspicuous in the writings of the apostles.

This peculiar feature of the teaching of the New Testament must, therefore, be taken into full account. It is too conspicuous to be overlooked

or lightly explained away. But does it distinctly teach the doctrine of a strictly vicarious punishment? Most certainly not. A few passages indeed can bear that construction, or even seem most naturally to involve that doctrine; *e. g.*, when Christ himself said, "The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45), he may be thought to imply that his death was to be substituted for that of men, and so, like ransom money paid for the deliverance of a captive, was to secure the redemption of men. Similarly Paul speaks of "Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6), and of "the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28). But if these expressions are to be taken strictly, they mean that *Christ's physical death exempts other men from physical death.* This, however, is so plainly contrary to fact that no one can defend such a construction of the language. Accordingly it has to be maintained that the death from which men are delivered is spiritual or eternal death, that is, the retributive punishment which men's sins deserve. But in that case consistency requires that Christ's death also should be taken in this same figurative sense.[1] And indeed some Satis-

[1] It is especially on this point that Prof. Denney's treatises on the atonement (*The Death of Christ*, and *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*) are disappointing. He makes the

factionists have not shrunk from the extreme of believing that Christ, between his crucifixion and his resurrection, went into hell and literally suffered the torments of the damned. But such heroic consistency of exposition is too severe for the most of them, and they content themselves

atonement consist strictly in the *death* of Christ. "Death," he says, "is the word which sums up the whole liability of man in relation to sin, and therefore when Christ came to give himself for our sins, he did it by dying" (*Death of Christ*, p. 128). But though he tries to make the most of physical death as being the "wages of sin," and as that through fear of which men are all their lifetime subject to bondage, it is only too obvious that from *that* death Christ does not deliver us. His labored effort to show "the ultimate unity of the natural and the spiritual" death (*Atonement*, etc., pp. 83–103) avails nothing, therefore; for if the death of Christ delivers man from death in any sense, it must be from death in the spiritual sense alone. And when we ask how Christ's death delivers us from that, the answer is equally unsatisfactory. Prof. Denney declares that he rejects the "forensic," "legal," or "judicial" theory of the atonement; yet the conception of *law*, as "a moral constitution," is made to play a part; and "the maintenance of this law" is what is secured by the atonement, which was made by Christ, "in whose life and death the most signal homage was paid to this law" (*ibid.*, p. 75). But *how* did his life and death secure this end? We are not told. Forgiveness of sin was accomplished; but upon what ground? We get no explanation more definite than that Christ "took the responsibilities of men upon himself"—a phrase which is over and over repeated, and seems to embody the author's theory of the atonement. But what does that *mean*? He avoids saying that Christ assumed the *guilt* and the *penalty* of our sins; but he distinctly says that he "took on him the consequences of our sins" (*Death*, etc., p. 98), and asks, "If we are not to say that the Atonement

with understanding the one death literally and the other spiritually. If, however, we may to this extent depart from the strict construction, it is allowable to go still further, if occasion requires, and to ask whether the notion of "ransom" (λύτρον) need here be taken in any stricter sense than the corresponding verb (λυτρόω), which, for example, in Luke xxiv. 21, has the general meaning of "deliver," with no suggestion of ransom in the proper sense. Such a question must be decided in the end by a more comprehensive consideration of the whole drift of the apostolic utterances on the subject of redemption.

Another form of expression which lends itself to the support of the Satisfaction doctrine is found in 1 Pet. ii. 24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree" (similarly Heb. ix. 28). This phrase is analogous to one which frequently recurs in the Old Testament. *E. g.*, Lev. xxiv. 15, "Whosoever curseth his God shall

. . . is vicarious or substitutionary, what are we to call it?" (*Atonement*, etc., p. 132). But the "consequences" or "responsibilities" incurred by sinners involve *remorse, retributive punishment.* Did Christ take this on himself? If he did, and so delivered men from it, the work was surely "legal," but any definite answer to such queries is carefully avoided. On the whole, the author seems to incline to the Anselmic theory, but shrinks from the logical consequences of it, and attempts to cover them up by the adoption of obscure phraseology. It is not in this way that a difficult subject is cleared up.

bear his sins," where the meaning plainly is: "he shall suffer punishment for his sin." When, therefore, Christ is said to have borne our sins, the implication may seem to be that he bore our punishment. But here too it must be questioned whether the language should be taken in this stricter sense. We read in Ex. xxviii. 38 that Aaron was to "bear the iniquity of the holy things"; and in Ezek. iv. 4–6 that the prophet was to bear the iniquity of Israel and of Judah by lying first on his left side, and then upon his right side, a certain number of days. In both these cases the punishment of sin was borne in only a symbolical way. And so in the two passages above referred to Christ may be rhetorically said to have been punished for us, when in strictness nothing more is meant than that he suffered on our behalf.

The same is to be said concerning Gal. iii. 13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us"; and 2 Cor. v. 21, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf." In these passages nothing is directly said about *substitution* of punishment. Christ was made sin, or a curse, on our behalf. The only question is whether such a substitution may not be implied in the strong expressions, "sin" and "curse," applied to Christ. But obviously the language in both cases is highly rhetorical. And the two statements are substantially equiva-

lent to one another. They mean that Christ was treated like a culprit; he endured the ignominy and suffering that are due to transgressors, though he was himself sinless. And this was done for our benefit—that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law, "that we might become the righteousness of God," *i. e.*, might be regarded or treated as righteous by God. Just how this result is produced by the death of Christ, Paul does not here expressly say. If we declare that it was produced by Christ's literally enduring the *punitive* suffering which was due to our sin—enduring it *in our stead*—we import into the language what does not stand in it.

A similar judgment must be rendered concerning those passages in which Christ is spoken of as a *sacrifice*. Thus in Heb. ix. 26 we read, "Now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." *Cf.* x. 10. So also Eph. v. 2, "Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." Likewise 1 Cor. v. 7, "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ." But here also, though under another figure, it is only said that Christ died for our benefit. The notion that by his "sacrifice" is implied a strictly vicarious relation of his death to ours, is sought not so much in the language itself, as in a certain interpretation of the Levitical sacrifices to which, we may pre-

sume, there is here a reference. Undoubtedly the Epistle to the Hebrews aims to show that the Mosaic sacrifices were typical of Christ, and that what they foreshadowed he once for all fulfilled. But it is still a question how far the Old Testament sacrifices themselves symbolized vicarious punishment. The most of them certainly had no such significance; they are rather pictured as gifts presented, "of a sweet savor unto Jehovah." Respecting the sin-offerings in particular, it is more plausible to find in them a vicarious meaning, inasmuch as it is often said that, as the result of atonement made, the sins of the offerer are forgiven (Lev. iv. 20, 26, 31, 35; Num. xv. 25–28; and so of the trespass-offering, Lev. v. 10, 13, 16; xix. 22). Yet after all it is nowhere said or implied that the death of the beast is a penal substitute for the death deserved by the sinner. On the contrary, all wilful transgressions were still to be punished according to law; at the most, these sacrifices are said to have secured forgiveness merely for so-called sins of ignorance, or sins committed "unwittingly." Only in the case of the annual day of atonement is it said that sins in general are forgiven as the result of the offerings, and then it is not a slaughtered beast, but a living one, that is said to bear the iniquities of the people (Lev. xvi. 21). Moreover, it is to be noted that, though Christ is sometimes called a sacrifice, he is never called distinctively a sin-offering.

Accordingly, though the death of Christ is in the New Testament brought into relation to the Levitical sacrifices, it is not therefore evident how we are to regard his death as related to the forgiveness of our sins. It is not clear how strictly the New Testament writers mean to represent the Old Testament sacrifices as fulfilled in Christ's death. Certainly so far as the formal act is concerned, the differences are more striking than the resemblances. Whereas according to the Mosaic law the forms to be observed were strictly prescribed—the offerer bringing the beast to the sanctuary, slaying it before Jehovah, while the priest sprinkles the blood before the veil—in the case of the death of Christ there is no offerer and no priest; and his death, instead of being a solemn act done by a penitent worshiper, is a brutal murder committed by an angry mob. The unlikeness in the outward forms of the two transactions being so great, it cannot be insisted that there is any closer likeness in the inner significance of the two.

A more plausible support for the conception of vicarious punishment is found in Rom. iii. 24–26, where Christ is said to have been set forth as "a propitiation . . . in his blood," that God "might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." God's justice, it is thought, is here represented as maintained through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, so that he

could be just, even when acquitting the guilty, their punishment having been borne by Christ, the substitute. Undoubtedly here, as in the passages just considered, Christ is spoken of as a sacrifice, an offering of a "sweet savor" to God. But it is not said that God is appeased through a vicarious punishment of sin; nor is this implied in the phrase, "just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." It is closely akin to John's language, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous [or "just"—the same word in the Greek] to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9), or to Paul's own language, *e.g.*, in Rom. ii. 5–10, where it is said to be God's "righteous judgment" that gives eternal life, glory, honor, and peace to the repentant and obedient (similarly 2 Thess. i. 6, 7). "Righteousness" is not indeed, as Ritschl maintains, synonymous with "grace"; but neither is it synonymous with retributive justice.[1] Paul simply says that it is a *right thing* to forgive the penitent. And when, to the objection that the law is thus made of none effect, he replies, "Nay, we establish the law" (Rom. iii. 31), he does not hint that this is done by satisfying the law through a vicarious penalty, but rather that the law is established by being obeyed: "God, sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh, that

[1] On Paul's use of the word "righteousness" a valuable discussion is to be found in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xxii., Part II., pp. 211 *ff.*, by Prof. J. H. Ropes.

the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

Still less can the notion of a strictly vicarious punishment be found in those more general and frequent expressions which speak of Christ as having died for men (Rom. v. 8; xiv. 15; 1 Cor. viii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 14, etc.) or for their sins (1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18); or in those which represent his blood as being efficacious in procuring forgiveness or reconciliation (Eph. ii. 13; Col. i. 20; 1 John i. 7; Rev. v. 9, etc.); or in those which speak similarly of Christ's sufferings (Acts xvii. 3; Heb. ii. 10, 18; xiii. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 21; iii. 18; iv. 13; 2 Cor. i. 5, etc.). Very certain it is that the forgiveness of sins is closely connected with the death of Christ, or with the shedding of his blood (Matt. xxvi. 28; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Heb. ix. 12). But it is not certain that this connection is affirmed or implied to consist in a strictly vicarious punishment endured by Christ in our stead. On the contrary, *there is not one passage in which such a doctrine is unequivocally laid down.* If it is assumed, or can otherwise be demonstrated, that such a punishment really took place, then no doubt these passages may be regarded as consistent with that theory; but they are equally consistent with a different one. Indeed, the preposition (ὑπέρ) commonly used in such expressions as "Christ died for us" means "in be-

half of," not "instead of." If the writers really conceived the death as strictly vicarious, they could have expressed the thought more distinctly.

Exegesis by itself will never solve the problem; it will not remove the antithetic judgments concerning divine government which underlie, and largely determine, the antithetic expositions of the Scriptures. The antithesis is this: The one class of theologians conceive God as a Ruler; the other, as a Father. According to the one view men are the subjects of a king, who imposes on them a rigid system of laws; according to the other, men are members of a family, in which filial and personal relations take precedence of the judicial and the governmental. The one says: Law is the supreme thing, and every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward; *fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.* The other says: The supreme desideratum is the greatest possible number of dutiful children; the promotion of holiness is of more consequence than the strict execution of justice; if a wayward son can be best reclaimed by paternal expostulation and the remission of merited punishment, then that is a wiser treatment than to deal with him according to his strict deserts, and thus harden him in rebellion.

In family government also there is law, and children are properly required to obey their parents; but if a disobedient child is sincerely

penitent, he is forgiven, and received back into the embrace of parental love, without being visited with full punishment for the disobedience. Even in civil government we are in some degree beginning to follow this example. The length of a criminal's imprisonment is often shortened on condition of his good conduct in prison. This indulgence could safely be carried much further than it is, if the officers of the law could look into the criminal's heart, and so never be liable to be deceived by a hypocritical penitence. A parent may also be similarly deceived, but is less likely to be than a magistrate. But in case the child's repentance seems to be genuine, the parent seldom deems it necessary to require from him penal satisfaction for his offense. Still less does he compel another child, innocent of the offense, to suffer vicariously for the guilty one; such a kind of family government would not only not maintain the honor of the laws of the household, it would be a travesty of justice, and would alienate the children from the parent. Indeed in any case a law is not *honored* so much by the *punishment* of a transgressor as by his *reformation*.

In the government of a state the *personal* relations subsisting between magistrates and citizens are of little or no account. Conduct is judged, and punishments are administered, according to the standard of a formal law. Very often one who outwardly conforms to it may be a much

worse man than another who breaks it; but the judges and juries cannot look into the heart. In some cases indeed the degree of guilt is judged according to the apparent motive; but this test can be seldom, and only very imperfectly, applied. In any case the personal relation of the criminal to the magistrate counts for nothing; indeed it is regarded as important that there should be no such relation; kinship with the accused on the part of the judge is deemed a positive disqualification.—In the family, on the contrary, all this is reversed. In the best family government, where the spirit and motive of the children can be measurably well discerned, conduct and character are judged, not according to formal conformity to certain outward rules, but according to the spirit of selfishness or of love which is seen to underlie the conduct. The end to be gained is not a mere formal, though heartless, obedience such as may save the child from discipline, but an obedience which springs from a hearty love of the child towards the parent and the other members of the family.

If we ask now to which of these two types of government the kingdom of God is most nearly analogous, it must be replied that, while it has points of resemblance to both, yet it is much the most like the ideal family government. The *personal* relation is everywhere emphasized. Even in the Old Testament we read, "Like as a father

pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. ciii. 13). He is indeed often called a King, yet the chief stress is laid, not on a code of laws, according to the literal observance or non-observance of which men are to be judged, but on the filial or unfilial attitude of the people towards Jehovah. "Hear, O heavens," says Isaiah, "and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. i. 2). There are indeed reproofs on account of violation of the ceremonial law, and also many burning denunciations of those who are guilty of specific offenses, such as murder, adultery, theft, dishonesty, extortion, and oppression; but all this is predominantly pictured not as a formal violation of statute law, but as an apostasy from God, personal infidelity towards him. "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal. ii. 10). And in the New Testament all the Mosaic law is declared by Jesus to be reducible essentially to this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37–39); and the one leading characteristic of God in relation to his people is set forth by him under the figure of Fatherhood. The dominant note is everywhere the personal, not the legal, relation of God to men.

In full accord with this is the method of the Divine dealing with human sins and imperfections. When the law is broken, God does not promptly and strictly punish the breach, after the manner of inflexible justice; but he is "*slow* to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ex. xxxiv. 6). He is not quick to punish; it is his way to "wait, that he may be gracious unto" his children (Isa. xxx. 18). Like a faithful, but affectionate, father, he is concerned not so much to maintain rigidly his sovereign authority, as to *train* his children up by patient, forbearing, loving instruction. Read the description in Hos. xi. 1–4: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them; they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." So Paul says, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. ii. 4). Again, we read: "The Lord . . . is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9).—The lesson of history is to the same effect. Even the greatest sinners are often allowed to enjoy long exemption

from trouble. Whatever human law may try to do, divine Providence certainly does not visit swift and righteous vengeance on every iniquity. Sooner might it be thought that God makes no distinction between the good and the bad, since often the righteous suffer more than the wicked, and it is generally admitted that, if strict retribution is ever to be dealt out to men, it is done only in that future life which is invisible to mortal eyes. Human life, as we see it, is certainly more like a training-school than like a court of justice. The very fact that God has instituted a scheme of redemption at all is the best evidence that he wishes life to be such a school.

So far, therefore, as human analogies have any weight, they indicate that the more correct theory of the atonement is not the Juridical or the Governmental, but (if I may so designate it) the Paternal theory. Not that any analogy is perfect. Parental government is seldom what it should be; it is often too stern, without being even just; again, it is often too lax, yet without a wise and tender love. But in its more ideal form it is the best human analogue of the kingdom of God.

We are here especially concerned with the problem of sin and forgiveness. Does family life and government present a true parallel to the dealings of God with men in his providential and redemptive measures? A superficial view may lead one to say that there is nothing in an ordinary family

experience resembling the divine scheme of atonement through Christ. But we must bear in mind the influence exerted by two misconceptions: (1) The one has to do with this very word "atonement," which occurs only once in the Authorized Version (Rom. v. 11), and not at all in the Revised Version of the New Testament. Currently used to denote the redeeming work of Christ, it has tended to familiarize the Christian mind with the idea that the vital thing in that redeeming work was a vicarious sacrifice whereby God was enabled to remit the merited penalty due to sinners. (2) The other notion is that God is an unfeeling Ruler rather than a tender-hearted Father.—It is true, these conceptions have been seldom held in all their naked harshness. The notion that an innocent person can suffer enough to take away the guilt of an evil-doer is so shocking to the moral sense, and so absolutely inconsistent with the practice of all human government, whether that of the state or that of the family, that it cannot be, and has not been, in its unvarnished simplicity accepted as the normal and necessary principle of the divine government. It has been mitigated, nay, almost nullified, by the companion doctrine, that in spite of the universal atonement only the *penitent* sinner can be forgiven. It was easily seen that an indiscriminate pardon of men, irrespective of their character, would be an act of divine madness, rather than of wisdom, love, or

justice—no matter how great or precious the sufferings of Christ may have been.

Then the notion that God is not a Father, capable of real affection and even of grief, but only an impassive governing Power,—this has never been consistently held. The same men who have zealously argued that God can have no feelings have yet had much to say about his love and his anger. But that inveterate, semi-pantheistic conception of the Deity, though now happily crumbling away, has had much to do in shaping the doctrine of redemption. God, though thought to be himself incapable of suffering, was supposed to know, as a Ruler, that suffering is the penalty merited by wickedness, but to have conceived the matter so mechanically as not to see that only the wicked themselves can justly be punished. Being, by virtue of his impassivity, unable to take the suffering upon himself, he determined to put it vicariously upon his Son, incarnated so as to be made able to suffer instead of guilty sinners. That he was thought to care enough about sinful men to wish to save them at all, was of course a gospel truth which asserted itself in spite of its inconsistency with the doctrine of the divine impassiveness.

When these two misleading conceptions are sloughed off, it becomes easy to see how the Paternal theory of divine government adjusts itself both to the moral sense and to the Biblical

representation. If there is anything true of an ideal family, it is that the parent enters with a keen sympathy into all the experiences of the children, whether pleasurable or painful. And if a child is unfilial, wayward, or dissolute, even though he himself in his heartlessness may be free from unhappiness, yet the parent suffers to the quick. What pain is more acute or tragic than the grief of a father or a mother striving and praying for long weary years in the hope of reclaiming a prodigal son? The suffering is acute just in proportion to the purity and uprightness of the parent. A dissolute father may be comparatively, if not absolutely, indifferent to the dissoluteness of his son; but a really good father cannot be.

This kind of suffering may not inaptly be called vicarious, in that the innocent parent cannot but bear the burden of the child's guilt, through the irresistible force of parental love. But there is in it no element of vicarious *penalty*, except in so far as the parent may to some extent ascribe the son's waywardness to his own parental infidelity, so that self-reproach is added to the grief over the son's evil ways. But even this self-reproach is no vicarious punishment endured instead of that which is deserved by the son, but is felt to be due to himself for his own guilt. In the divine Father, however, when he grieves over the rebelliousness of his children, this element is wholly

wanting. It is grief pure and simple, over the sinfulness in which he himself has no share. And it must be presumed to be intense just in proportion to the greatness of the antipathy of God's holiness to human sin. That not only the fact, but even the possibility, of such divine grief should ever have been denied by Christians, is one of the marvels of theological caprice. Assuming that God is a person, and that we are made in his image, Christian theists have always ascribed to him intellect and will analogous to ours; but though in human psychology the sensibilities always rank as a department of the soul co-ordinate with the other two, yet strangely enough this has been denied to the Deity altogether.

The strangeness of this phenomenon is all the greater in view of the fact that the Bible is full of language which asserts and implies that God is emphatically a God of feeling. Hundreds of times do we read of his anger and indignation against the sins of men. Over and over are we told of his compassion, his pity, his lovingkindness, his forbearance, towards his people. "In all their afflictions," says the prophet," he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit" (Isa. lxiii. 9, 10). "How oft," says the Psalmist, "did they rebel against him in the

wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!" (Ps. lxxviii. 40.) "Forty years long was I grieved with that generation" (Ps. xcv. 10). And Paul says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. iv. 30). But theologians say that we *cannot* grieve God. "Nothing in the created universe," one of them assures us, "can make God feel pain or misery." [1] He admits that God can be angry towards human sin, and that he even exercises the emotion of love towards men; but he will not concede that men can produce in him an *unpleasant* emotion. His hatred of sin, we are assured, causes him no unhappiness, because of its righteousness.[2] By parity of reasoning it would follow that the human father of a dissolute son cannot be made unhappy by the dissoluteness, since his anger towards the son is a righteous one! The more unsullied his own character is, the more intense his hatred of his son's iniquities, the happier he must be!

Having thus made the divine blessedness impervious to any disagreeable impressions caused by human sinfulness, our theologian goes on to assure us that God *can* inflict unhappiness upon *himself*, and that he did this when he gave his only-begotten Son to suffer for men. The psychological puzzle grows more complicated. If God was so perfectly happy in his righteous indignation

[1] Shedd, *Dogm. Theol.*, vol. ii., p. 387.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., 176 *f.*

against human sin, one cannot but wonder why he should himself disturb that happiness *on account* of human sin. His "compassion," we are told, led him to do this.[1] But what is compassion but fellow-*suffering?* It implies a feeling of *dissatisfaction* with man's moral condition; and that, if we know anything about it, is an unpleasant feeling. This compassion, it is said, was so great as to "induce" God "to lay man's punishment upon his own Son"—"a sacrifice that is inconceivable and unutterable." Surely the dissatisfaction with man's state must have been very great which was enough to induce God to make such a sacrifice in order to change it. But no; to our confusion we are assured that there was no feeling of dissatisfaction at all; God was blissfully happy in view of human conditions *until* he undertook to do something to *change* those conditions! He subjected himself to unutterable pain in order to better a state of things with which he was perfectly satisfied!

The wonder is that one who gives such a representation should yet be able to speak about the "paternal qualities" and "universal fatherhood" of God. No real human father was ever made in the likeness of such a Heavenly Father as that. Think of a man who could say, with reference to a wayward son, that he is perfectly happy, because his indignation against the son's wickedness is

[1] Shedd, *Dogm. Theol.*, vol. ii., p. 393.

perfectly just—that he feels no sting sharper than a serpent's tooth in the son's ingratitude, no grief over his lapse into loathsome vices, no agony over the prospect of his sinking into eternal ruin. All temptation to such feelings swallowed up, and transformed into unsullied bliss, by the righteousness of his virtuous anger! If one could regard such a man as nothing less than a moral monstrosity, what else shall be thought of a God painted in the same colors? Such a conception of him is the product of eudæmonism, which regards happiness as the highest good, and insists that, at whatever sacrifice of his fatherly nature, God's blessedness must be kept perfectly untarnished. It ascribes to him a sort of hemiplegia, consisting in a paralysis of one whole side of his emotional nature, viz., all natural feeling towards the sin and evil of the universe, leaving only the purely pleasurable emotions in normal condition. More consistent, even if more reprehensible, is the doctrine which makes the paralysis complete—a total absence of all emotion, whether of pleasure or of pain. Both views coincide in making him utterly free from unhappiness in view of human sin. Over against the vice and wretchedness of the world, he is conceived as sitting on his throne, the Supreme Stoic of the universe—as unmoved and unfeeling as the rock against which the storms and waves of the ocean beat for centuries in vain.

In opposition to such a doctrine it would be more true to fact, to Scripture, and to reason, to say that God is the Supreme Sufferer of the universe—that, as he has an infinitely more comprehensive view than any man can have of the amount of sin and suffering in the world, and as he has an infinitely keener sense than man can have of the odiousness of sin, so his mental suffering in consequence of all this evil must be immensely greater than that which any man can have or even conceive. In our case there is in general an acute feeling of moral disgust or distress only when the sin is near enough to be more or less distinctly apprehended—especially when it is found in those who are intimately related to us. But even then our moral sense is dulled by our own evil propensities and habits, while, as regards the wickedness and woe of men in general, we know but little and feel less. How would it be, if we could see *all* this evil, and see it *just as it is!* What must it be to the eye of divine omniscience! What must be the depths of divine anguish in consequence of it!

A father's suffering because of a son's wayward-ness is proportioned to his love of the son. This love moves him to desire above all things else the son's reformation and restoration to the full enjoyment of parental affection. He is by no means insensible to the son's ill-desert; but his great longing is not that the son may get his deserts,

but that he may get a better mind. He yearns not for his punishment, but for his salvation. Just so in the Divine Father, the more intense his holy indignation against the sinner's sins is, the more passionately does he desire that the sinner should forsake his evil ways and receive full pardon. And in either case the most effectual means of bringing the wayward son to a better mind is to impress upon him the sense of the deep grief of the father's heart, caused as it is by wounded love—a love that still longs to forgive. The Prodigal Son came to himself, and resolved to return home, when he bethought himself of the wealth of his father's love which was aching over his own profligacy. He knew that his father's sense of right had been touched to the quick by his unfilial conduct; but if he had been told that the father had inflicted condign punishment on his elder brother as a means of satisfying that sense of right, it may be questioned whether he would have been so ready to return. If the brother could be punished so much more than he deserved, how could he assume that he himself would be punished so much less than he deserved, or even be forgiven altogether?

But it may still be asked, granting that God desires to forgive sinners, yet what is the meaning of the repeated declaration that Christ died for us? I answer: It certainly does *not* mean, and it is not said, that he died *in our stead*. Still less is it said

or implied that he assumed our guilt, or bore our punishment. When in ordinary human relations one man is said to die for another, no one ever thinks that the one assumes the other's guilt, but only that, on account of unselfish benevolence, by losing his own life, he somehow saves that of the other, or secures for him some other great benefit. So Christ's death was a proof of his love. He "loved us, and gave himself up for us" (Eph. v. 2; Gal. ii. 20). So much is certain. Equally certain is it that Christ's death exhibited the Father's love (John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10). "God sent forth his Son, . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). Just *how* Christ's death or sufferings expressed the love of God, we are not expressly told; but God did thus manifest his forgiving grace: "God in Christ forgave" us (Eph. iv. 32; i. 7). All this points in the direction, not that Christ was an intermediary, warding off divine vengeance from the guilty, but rather that he was the incarnate, visible *manifestation of the Father* on the earth. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. . . . No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 14, 18). "No one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever

the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). The Son came, not to *appease* the Father, but to *reveal* him. And this revelation was made by his whole life—in what he said, and did, and suffered. This truth of the oneness of the Father and the Son in the work of redemption is tersely expressed by Paul in that pregnant passage which in a few words sums up the whole gospel : "*God was in Christ* reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. v. 19).

The time has been when discourses on the atonement abounded in descriptions of the physical agonies endured in the crucifixion, as if Jesus' vicarious suffering consisted in them chiefly, or even in them alone. That time is nearly, if not quite, gone. Despite all attempts to magnify those bodily pains, it could not but be seen that it was useless to try to prove them to be enough to outweigh the punishment deserved by a sinful race. It may be that Christ had a much more sensitive nervous organization than the robbers who were crucified with him; but nothing is said about that in the histories, while it *is* said that his dying agonies were shorter than theirs, and that he was exempted from one of the tortures to which they were subjected (John xix. 31–33). Certain it is that thousands of men have to all appearance suffered more and more acutely than he, so far as physical pain is concerned; and equally certain is it that physical pain does not

constitute the only, or even the chief, element in the punishment of sin.

It was, therefore, a wholesome change when attention was more directed to the *mental* sufferings of Christ. These of course cannot be fully appreciated and distinctly pictured; but it is easy to see that they must have been peculiarly intense. If even our souls often sink within us at the little we can see or know of the world's wickedness, what must have been the experience of his sensitive sinless soul, seeing, immeasurably more clearly than we can see, the fearful enormity of the wickedness. Even if we could regard these sufferings as strictly vicarious and penal, it would be more reasonable to find the atoning efficacy in the moral repugnance which he felt towards human depravity in general, and in his bitter experience of the "gainsaying of sinners against himself" (Heb. xii. 3) in particular, than merely in those corporeal sufferings which, at the worst, were comparatively few and brief. The New Testament, though it often speaks of his sufferings and death, nowhere lays any stress on these as involving physical pain. There is no hint that he was ever afflicted with any sickness or bodily infirmity. Of his distinctly physical experiences little is said. Incidentally he is spoken of as liable, like others, to the sensations of hunger (Matt. iv. 2; xxi. 18), thirst (John xix. 28), and weariness (John iv. 6), but there is no intimation

that in general he was a physical sufferer. The bloody sweat which fell from him in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 44) is attributed to his mental agony. When he spoke of his impending death, though he called it a cup not easy to drink (Mark x. 38), and a baptism the anticipation of which distressed him (Luke xii. 50), and when in the garden he prayed that the cup might pass from him (Mark xiv. 35, 36), it is not intimated that the thing especially dreaded was the bodily suffering involved. No more reason have we for assuming that his wailing cry on the cross (Matt. xxvii. 46) was extorted from him by mere physical agony. No doubt he suffered much in body from the scourging, the crown of thorns, and the crucifixion itself. Perhaps he suffered more, possibly far more, than any other man would have suffered under a like infliction. As to this we are left wholly to our conjectures. The certain thing is that neither he nor the Evangelists speak especially of his physical pain. Rather, the main impression derived from the account of the last hours of his life is that of a mysterious spiritual gloom and anguish. And likewise whenever, at any time of his life, he is expressly said to have had any painful experience, it is always a sorrow of soul (Matt. xxvi. 38; Luke xix. 41; John xi. 33, 34; xii. 27; xiii. 21), or grief over the wickedness of men (Mark iii. 5).

The sufferings of Christ, then, were predomi-

nantly mental sufferings. They were a natural and necessary consequence of the close and constant contact of his sinless purity of soul with the wretchedness, the coarseness, the sensuality, the selfishness, the hypocrisy, and the malignity of the men around him. Intense sympathy with the suffering and the sorrowing, intense moral indignation towards hardhearted villainy, combined with a yearning love for all men, but a love which was generally rejected and despised—this made him indeed "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. liii. 3). Such grief was his natural and normal experience in the human life which he had assumed. So far from being an *infliction* imposed upon him by the Father, it was *identical with that which is felt by the Father himself*. Only, being manifested in the visible form of a human being, the divine attitude towards sin became vivid and apprehensible, as it could not be when considered as that of the invisible God alone. With reference to this experience in particular, as with reference to his life in general, Christ could say to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). He was the effulgence of the divine glory—the very embodiment of God's hatred of sin, and also of his long-suffering love and self-sacrifice endured on behalf of sinners. "In the face of Jesus Christ" God has "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory

of God"—the glory of his forgiving grace (2 Cor. iv. 6).

The death of Christ was the culmination of his self-sacrificing life. To be willing to die for a friend is generally held to be the highest proof of sincere affection. But Christ died for us "when we were enemies" (Rom. v. 10). Those in whose behalf he died were those who put him to death. His whole life had been a conflict with evil. His love had been repaid with suspicion or with hate. His works of beneficence had been called works of the devil. His efforts to reclaim and redeem sinners were met by contumely, false accusations, and an ignominous death. He "resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb. xii. 4). His death was the completion of the struggle through which he overcame the world. His whole life had been a palpable manifestation of God's eternal purpose of grace (2 Tim. i. 9, 10; Rom. xvi. 26; Col. i. 26, 27; Tit. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 20); but his death put the seal upon his life. And so, though the Father could not share in the experience of physical death, yet Paul could say that "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). The Son's death was the expression of the Father's love. In the work of salvation they are one and inseparable.

But after all, it is said, a very great stress is laid in the New Testament upon the single fact of the

death of Christ as being especially the means by which men are "reconciled to God" (Rom. v. 10). How is that consistent with the view that his redeeming work was executed by his whole incarnate life? As consistent, I answer, as it is with literal truth to speak of a national flag as protecting the citizens of a country; and much more so, for Christ's death was itself a striking part of the self-denial and self-sacrifice which he had been displaying all his life. That the New Testament writers should put this part for the whole—especially this tragic and crowning part—is the most natural thing conceivable in a book which is full of rhetorical figures of speech. By the single terms "death," "blood," and "cross" could be graphically expressed what else would have required many words. If any proof is needed of the correctness of this view, it is furnished in the classic passage, Phil. ii. 7, 8, where Paul says that Christ "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Here the death of the cross is plainly represented as simply the climax of a life of humiliation and suffering obedience.[1]

[1] It is at least a question whether 1 Pet. ii. 24 does not convey a similar idea. The marginal rendering of R. V. is the literal one: "who his own self carried up our sins to the tree," *i.e.*, carried our sins as a burden all his life even up to the cross. Commentators say that it means: He carried up

In the familiar and terse sentence, "Christ died for us," is, therefore, concentrated the expression of the fact of God's wounded, yet forgiving, love. He "*gave* his only begotten Son" (John iii. 16); he "*spared not* his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32). It was a sacrifice on the part of both the Father and the Son, when the Son emptied himself and took the form of a servant. And in so far as this yearning and long-suffering love of God in Christ is felt by sinners to be a reality; in so far as each one can be made to believe this, and to say, "Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20), does the gospel of Christ become "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). A wayward child who cannot be won to penitence and purity by the agony and entreaties of a father or a mother who is longing to forgive him and to welcome him back will ordinarily be impervious to every other appeal. No vicarious suffering inflicted on an innocent third party would move him so much as the consciousness that he himself has wielded the sword that pierces through the parent's very soul.

The fear is sometimes expressed, that, if forgiveness is understood to be offered freely, without any atonement, on the simple condition of re-

our sins to the cross in order to expiate them on the cross. But this is a thought imported into the verse rather than one directly conveyed by it.

pentance, salvation is made too easy. It is compared to the conduct of the indulgent parent, whose partial love makes him overlook his children's offenses. To this it is to be replied: (1) Repentance, as defined in the Scriptures, is the beginning of a new life, the abandonment of sin, the adoption of love to God and love to man as the dominant motive of life and conduct. Nothing can be farther from the gospel doctrine than that forgiveness means liberty to keep on sinning. And is it an excessively "easy" thing to "put off the old man" and "put on the new man"? (2) Forgiveness, in order to be forgiveness, *must be free.* "Free grace" is the keynote of the gospel. It is the offer of the "wine and milk" of salvation "without money and without price." Forgiveness is a remission of the penalty of guilt. It is a blotting out of sins (Isa. xliii. 25; Acts iii. 19), the sinners being required to render no atonement, expiation, or satisfaction for the sins that are past, but only to be henceforth "servants to righteousness" instead of "servants to sin" (Rom. vi. 19, 20). But if the penalty has really been inflicted, if an expiation has really been made, if one can say with literal truth,

> "Jesus paid it all;
> Nothing more I owe,"—

why, then forgiveness is impossible, there is nothing to be forgiven; the old scores have been

wiped out by a substitute, and the repentant sinner can *demand* exemption from punishment as his right. "Grace is no more grace." And when it is said that the grace is exercised in the very act of inflicting vicarious punishment on the innocent substitute, it must be replied that that kind of grace which consists in punishing the innocent instead of the guilty is also "no more grace." The grace shown to the guilty would be neutralized by the injustice suffered by the innocent; and the more sensitive the conscience of the penitent sinner may be, the less willing must he be to accept forgiveness on the ground of a wrong done to another man. Even a debased criminal, to whom should be promised release from prison on the ground that a perfectly innocent man is found ready to serve out the rest of his term, would be honored if he should reply: "If either I, the guilty one, or he, the innocent one, must suffer the penalty, let me remain; I decline to be pardoned on such terms."

The great desideratum is not so much that salvation should not seem to be made too easy as that sin should not be made to seem too small. Conviction of sin, a keen feeling of its vileness, its odiousness in the sight of God—this is what is most needed. And this is best secured when the sinner is made to see that his sin causes constant and poignant grief to the loving heart of his Heavenly Father and of his Incarnate Saviour.

If this will not move him to repentance, he certainly will not be moved by being told of an arbitrary scheme of atonement devised by a God who is incapable of any real feeling, and devised in order that just vengeance may not be cheated of a victim.

The extreme antithetic conceptions under consideration concerning the conditions of salvation are these: on the one hand, that sin can be forgiven only on the ground of an adequate punishment endured by an innocent person in place of the guilty sinner; on the other hand, that forgiveness is conditioned only on the sinner's repentance. Are these opposite views irreconcilable? Must the one be absolutely rejected, and the other be unqualifiedly affirmed? Or is there a middle course to be adopted?

There is certainly a presumption that, as in other cases where antithetic views have long maintained themselves, so here there is an element of truth in each of the opposing doctrines; and it is often and plausibly urged as a strong or even conclusive argument in favor of the Satisfaction theory, that it has so long and so widely held sway in the Christian Church. There is force in the argument. God is a God of justice as well as of love. His justice, his holiness, must assert itself in his dealings with sinners. It cannot indeed assert itself in the full punishment of

all sin, if the sinner is to be forgiven; forgiveness means that merited punishment is remitted. The question, then, is, how, consistently with the remission of punishment, God's justice can be vindicated. Confessedly it is not directly and fully inflicted on the guilty; how else can it be honored and maintained? The Satisfactionist alleges that this is done by the vicarious punishment of an innocent person. The Anti-satisfactionist objects, with reason, that this would not be an exercise of justice, but rather of injustice. Yet he too must concede and even insist that the sacredness and binding force of God's moral law shall not be impaired; that divine righteousness must not be desecrated. And the only way in which that righteousness can vindicate itself, consistently with the forgiveness of sin, is to *make sinners feel and recognize the rightfulness and obligatoriness of the divine law.* Bringing sinners to a keen sense of guilt and obligation is a grander thing than to punish them; it is a greater victory for the law. The one process makes alive; the other destroys.

This best vindication of divine justice—this putting of the law in the inward parts and writing of it in the hearts of men (Jer. xxxi. 33)—is accomplished (1) by Christ's unique exposition of the law and unique exemplification of a holy life, and (2) by his exhibition of the intense spiritual sorrow and suffering which the sins of men have brought upon the Heavenly Father and the In-

carnate Redeemer. This suffering grows directly out of the divine love and the divine desire to forgive and to save. It is at once the best proof of God's forgiving love, and the most impressive assertion of the sanctity of the divine law. It is in a very true sense *vicarious* suffering; for those who are duly impressed by it, and are led to repentance, are delivered from the suffering which they deserve.

But this suffering is not vicarious *punishment.* Even the extremest Satisfactionists insist that Christ was perfectly sinless; he was not punished for his own guilt. Some indeed hold that the guilt of sinners was transferred to him; but whatever this may mean, it does not mean that he became personally guilty—ill-deserving. He was, therefore, not punished in the strict sense of the term; in this all schools of Christian theologians are substantially agreed. On the other hand, they agree that Christ did *suffer* on account of sin —yes, that he suffered instead of sinners; the difference is largely one of phraseology, rather than of thought. At the most, the difference is on the point, whether Christ's sufferings served in a strict sense to satisfy divine justice. And this difference vanishes in the practical experience and pious meditation of the Christian; for that which moves his heart is certainly not the mere thought of so much suffering judicially inflicted on Christ in place of the same amount deserved by sinners,

but rather the thought of the love expressed in the suffering. All the strongest expressions of the Bible and of Christian hymnody which deal with the sufferings and death of Christ are still appropriate, when these are not viewed as a piacular sacrifice, but as the pangs of holy grief and wounded love. The expressions may often be extravagant in form, and, when strictly taken, inexact; yet hardly any language can be too strong to set forth the suffering and redeeming grace of "God in Christ."

The view above presented may seem, however, not to do full justice to those passages of the New Testament which assert the *exclusiveness* and *indispensableness* of the work wrought by Christ in his earthly life, and the absolute necessity of faith in the atoning sacrifice which he made. Thus Peter says: "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). It is said that "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10). "Thou shalt be saved," says Paul, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead" (Rom. x. 9); and he adds: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not

believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (verses 13, 14). This, if taken strictly, may seem to exclude from salvation not only all who lived before Christ, but also all living after him who do not hear of him.

And such, especially in previous centuries, has been widely held to be the fact. Not only the heathen who lived before Christ, but all in every age who have not known of him, have been consigned to hopeless perdition. Generally indeed an exception has been made in favor of the ancient Jews, it being held that, though they died before the Christian era, they had the *promise* of a Messiah, and could exercise faith in a Saviour who was yet to come. But this notion is not warranted by the New Testament. Much as is there said of the Old Testament as prophesying and foreshadowing Christ, it is nowhere taught that the ancient Jews were saved through faith in the atoning work of the son of Mary who was to come. When Paul asks the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" (Rom. iii. 1), he does not answer it by alleging that the Jews had had a clear foreknowledge of Christ's redemptive work, though such an allegation, could he have made it, would apparently very much have helped his argument. Nor, when a little later he comes to speak particularly of Abraham, does he even faintly intimate that the patriarch had any

knowledge of the historic Jesus, or that his faith and acceptance had conscious relation to a future Redeemer. Yet Abraham is held up as "the father of all them that believe" (iv. 11), his faith being used as an illustration of the same faith which, in the previous chapter and in the following one, is described as faith in Jesus Christ. Abraham's faith was faith in *God;* he "believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3). No attempt is made to connect his faith with a Redeemer yet to come.

Just the same holds true of the attitude of our Saviour himself. His advent was heralded as that of him who was to save his people from their sins (Matt. i. 21); and he himself said that he had come to seek and to save them that were lost (Luke xix. 10). But if this might seem to imply that none were saved of those who lived and died before his day, we need only to refer to the fact that he himself nowhere makes any such affirmation, but on the contrary both implies and declares the opposite. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," he says to the impenitent, "when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without" (Luke xiii. 28). The Old Testament is full of discourse concerning the contrast between the godly and the ungodly, and abundantly affirms the forgiving and saving love of God as exercised towards the penitent.

And both Jesus and his immediate disciples accepted the Old Testament as an authoritative record of God's character and dealings. Nothing can be plainer than that they regarded God's redeeming work as not first inaugurated by the coming of Christ, but as one which had been going on during all the centuries before. The catalogue of the heroes of faith, as given in Hebrews xi., in which Enoch, and Noah, and multitudes of other Old Testament saints, are held up as examples for the encouragement of Christians, is only one of many conclusive proofs of this.

Just so Peter, who, as above quoted, seems to make salvation dependent exclusively on faith in the crucified and risen Jesus, is soon after found saying: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (Acts x. 34, 35). It follows conclusively that, even if the salvation of men in general does seem to be conditioned on the redeeming work of Christ, wrought during his earthly life, the efficacy of that work yet does not depend on its being *known* to those who are saved by it.

The reconciliation of the two apparently differing representations is, however, not difficult. In the mind of the apostles *faith in God and faith in Christ are essentially one and the same thing.* In the verses in which the transition is made from the case of Abraham to that of his readers, Paul

says, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. iv. 23, 24). *Christian faith* is thus, like Abraham's, called *faith in God*, but with the addition, that it is the God who raised Jesus from the dead. The essential thing, however, is *trust in the forgiving love of God*, as Paul further declares, when he quotes (iv. 6) David as setting it forth in the words: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin" (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2). If, then, Abraham and David, without any knowledge of the historical Christ, could and did exercise saving faith in God, so could all others of the same race and period; so could all others of any race or period. This is the unavoidable inference from the teaching of the New Testament in general.

We are thus freshly confirmed in the assurance that the work of Christ on earth is not an absolutely new, unique, and isolated work—not a work in which he stands, as it were, midway between God and man, and for the first time brings them together; but rather that it is the final, supreme, visible, and tangible manifestation of the self-sacrificing, forgiving love of the Heavenly Father—"the eternal life which was with the

Father," but now "was manifested unto us," as John says, so that it could be "heard," "seen," and "handled" (1 John i. 1, 2).

The passage just referred to intimates that the life-giving agency of the "Word" did not begin when he became flesh, but was then especially made "manifest." This also seems to be a necessary inference from the two forms of representation which we find in the New Testament—not merely found in different books, but repeatedly made by one and the same man, viz. (1) that the saving love of God is universal, embracing all races and all ages, while yet (2) salvation is conditioned exclusively on the person and work of Jesus Christ. One solution is found when we regard the redeeming work of the Logos as not first begun in the reign of Tiberius, but as having been carried on before his incarnation. This conception, it is true, is not often distinctly expressed in the New Testament. But that is not strange. The great concern of the apostles was to bring the men of their own time to the knowledge and acceptance of the salvation heralded by Christ. Theirs was a practical work; and they paid little attention to speculative questions and difficulties which might be suggested by their preaching. Yet there are not wanting utterances which imply a more universal application of Christ's redemptive work than lies on the surface of the New Testament. Peter (1 Pet. i. 11) speaks of the Spirit of

Christ as moving the Hebrew prophets; John (Rev. xiii. 8), of the Lamb as having been "slain from the foundation of the world"; Paul, of Christians as chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4); of "the eternal purpose which" God "purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (iii. 11); of the "grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal" (2 Tim. i. 9). Taken by themselves, these expressions might be interpreted as referring only to God's eternal purpose to bring Christ into the world; but taken in connection with the general drift of the teaching of the New Testament concerning the Redeemer, they are most naturally to be understood as implying not only the pre-existence of Christ, but also his eternal relation to the redeemed. To this may be added frequent instances in which the New Testament writers ascribe to Christ what in the Old Testament is plainly ascribed to Jehovah; *e.g.*, Rom. x. 13 (Joel ii. 32); Heb. i. 6 (Ps. xcvii. 7); i. 10 (Ps. cii. 25); xi. 26 (where Moses is spoken of as "accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt").

The early Church fathers were warranted, therefore, in holding the doctrine that the Logos before the Christian era was the medium through which divine truth and grace was imparted to men. Especially did they lay stress on the thought that the many utterances of heathen

writers which strikingly resemble those of the New Testament were inspired by the "Logos spermatikos" (the seminal Word), who before his incarnation was active as the revealer of divine wisdom and love.[1] It was natural to assume that a being who could be characterized as the image of the invisible God, the one in whom all things were created, and in whom all things consist (Col. i. 15–17), could not have confined his redeeming work to the "last days" of the world.

Another way of connecting the agency of Christ with the salvation of men who lived before his incarnation is to say that they were forgiven on the ground of an atonement yet to be made, although themselves without any knowledge of that atonement. In this case that faith in Christ which in the New Testament is made a condition of salvation is supposed to be found implicitly in that spirit of repentance and dependence on the divine mercy which may be exercised towards God in any age and any nation. A suggestion of this idea may be found in Rom. iii. 25, where God's forbearance in passing over the sins done aforetime is connected with the redeeming work of Christ. So Heb. ix. 15: "For this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal

[1] See especially Edmund Spiess, *Logos Spermatikos.*

inheritance." This is a mode of reconciling the two seemingly contradictory facts: that, on the one hand, the redemptive work of Christ is represented as of universal and indispensable validity, while, on the other, men of the earlier ages are represented as saved without any personal knowledge of the historic Christ. The atonement of Christ may seem in these two passages to be pronounced to be retroactive, a "redemption" of sins committed hundreds of years before. But this cannot mean that there was no forgiveness of sins under the old covenant. This would not only contradict the Bible in general, but also the passage from Paul in particular which expressly speaks of "the passing over of the sins done aforetime," and tells us that the redemption that is in Christ Jesus was designed to *show* God's righteousness in having exercised this forbearance. The life and death of the incarnate Logos *fully revealed* the redeeming grace which had always and everywhere been exercised, and more or less clearly apprehended. That grace "was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. i. 9, 10).

But whether, and in what way, the Logos before his incarnation mediated the divine work of redemption, may be regarded as of minor prac-

tical importance, or even as a somewhat doubtful and speculative question. The certain thing is that according to the New Testament that work of redemption did not begin in the reign of Tiberius. And when we are told that Christ and his apostles make faith in Christ and his atonement an indispensable condition of salvation (*e.g.*, John vi. 53; Heb. ix. 28), it need only be replied that, unless we wish to accuse them of the plainest self-contradiction, we must somehow reconcile this doctrine of the supreme value of Christ's redemptive work with the equally certain doctrine that God's redemptive love is limited to no time or place (Matt. xxv. 34–40; Acts x. 34, 35; Rom. ii. 10, 11). This, however, can never be done so long as the crucifixion of Christ—that local and single event—is conceived to be the sole and exclusive ground on which forgiveness can be offered to penitent men, and especially so long as knowledge of that event, and faith in its saving efficacy, are made the sole condition of receiving that forgiveness.

The reconciliation of the two doctrines can be effected only when the work of Christ is regarded, not as the *beginning*, but as the *end*, the climax, of God's redemptive work; not as the *sole*, but as the *chief* and *final*, revelation of God's forgiving love. So viewing it, we can see the reasonableness of what otherwise may well seem harsh, when it is said: "He that believeth on" the Son "is

not judged; but he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). If Abraham could say to the rich man concerning his brethren on the earth, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31), much more may it be said of men in general, that, if they cannot be moved by the love of God as manifested in the life and death of Christ, they cannot be moved to repentance at all.

This view of the work of redemption is fitted to relieve the mind with reference to certain other difficulties which are apt to puzzle the minds of good Christians to whom the atonement of Christ has been represented as the one ground of salvation and the one source of access to God. (1) One of these difficulties is connected with just this notion of "access"—the notion that it is only through Jesus Christ as an intermediary that any one can approach the Father. The impression is often made that God is a Sovereign, hedged about, like an earthly king, with such a majesty and sanctity that no one can get an audience with him except as he is recommended and introduced by a special favorite. Certain Biblical passages seem to sanction such a conception of our relation to God. Paul speaks of Christ as the one "through whom we have had our access by faith into this

grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2). Again: "Through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). The Epistle to the Hebrews often calls Christ our High Priest who "ever liveth to make intercession for" us (Heb. vii. 25; so Rom. viii. 34). And Christ himself says, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6), and, "I am the door of the sheep" (x. 7).

What do such expressions mean? It is often objected to the Roman Catholic Church that it inculcates the notion that intermediaries are necessary between the believer and the Heavenly Father—the priest, the Pope, deceased saints, or the Madonna. Is the Biblical and the Protestant doctrine the same as that, only that Jesus is the mediator instead of these others? This is certainly the conception which many seem to have; and a kind of scruple is often felt about approaching directly to God in prayer except as one takes pains to come "in the name" of the Son, or "pleads his merits," as a sort of justification of the petition for pardon and sanctification. Now we find, to be sure, Christ saying, "I chose you . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John xv. 16). But he likewise says, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will *I* do" (John xiv. 14). "In my name" is here, according to Biblical usage, practically equivalent to "in me." To ask for any-

thing in his name is to ask for it "in him," that is as being a member of his mystical body. There is nothing in the phrase which should suggest the notion that Jesus is a sort of bondsman or sponsor, the presenting of whose "name," as that of a rich or responsible person, can secure a loan or a favor which otherwise an indigent suppliant might sue for in vain. Least of all are we warranted in conceiving of him as nothing but a uniquely pious man who, being a favorite of God, is able by his entreaties to win God over to grant for his sake to repentant sinners what their own supplications without those entreaties could not gain. When Paul speaks of Christ as interceding for us (Rom. viii. 34), the statement is brought in as one part of a proof that "God is for us" (ver. 31): "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (ver. 32). Whatever this intercession of Christ may mean, therefore, it is an intercession which the Father himself has provided. It is a transaction taking place, not outside, but inside, of the Deity, just as a few verses before (ver. 26, 27) we are told that, when we pray, the Spirit "maketh intercession for us . . . according to the will of God." [1]—And as for the notion that suppliants should "plead the merits" of

[1] Essentially the same explanation applies to 1 John ii. 1, where Jesus Christ is said to be our "Advocate with the Father."

Christ as a means of inducing God to show favor, it has no Biblical warrant whatever. We read indeed in Eph. iv. 32 (A. V.) that God "for Christ's sake hath forgiven" us; and this may seem to countenance the doctrine that Christ's merits are reckoned to our credit as a ground of forgiveness. But this is an instance of a translation affected by a dogmatic prepossession; for the Greek original simply says, "even as God also in Christ forgave you" (so R. V.). There still remains, it is true, the passage, "I write unto you . . . because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John ii. 12). But the antecedent of "his" is left entirely indefinite, as also the agent who forgives. If for the latter we supply "God," who is generally represented as the one who forgives, we have, "your sins are forgiven you [by God] for his name's sake"—in which case the most natural construction is, that God forgives for his own sake; just as in Ezek. xxxvi. 22 he says, with reference to his great work of cleansing the people from their sins, "I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name."

The two utterances of Christ himself, above quoted, are stronger than any of the others, and, if taken strictly, do affirm indeed that he is the exclusive avenue of approach to the Heavenly Father. But the hyperbolic character of the language is obvious. When Jesus says, "All that

came before me are thieves and robbers" (John x. 8), no one can understand him to mean that before his time no one had ever had access to God, and that all the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Covenant had been hypocrites and deceivers. And so when he says that no one cometh to the Father but through him, a literal understanding of the statement leads to the extravagant result that up to his time no one had ever come to the Father. But this would contradict not only the whole Old Testament, but the general drift of his own teachings. The burden of these two discourses is to the same effect: that Jesus only is the complete revelation of God. The one culminates in the affirmation, "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30); the other, in the declaration, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9). He is the door of access, not in the sense that he is the sole medium through which one comes, but rather in the sense that he is the visible embodiment of the Father—God manifest in the flesh. The door has always been open; in Christ it is open as never before.

(2) Another question which often puzzles the Christian mind is this: If salvation is conditioned on faith in Christ, why did the incarnation and the sacrificial work of Christ take place at so late a time in the history of the world? Deliverance of men from sin being the object of redemption, why should not that deliverance have been proclaimed

as soon as man began to sin? Why were thousands of years allowed to lapse before he appeared through whom alone we have the forgiveness of our sins?

These questions would be difficult to answer, if salvation did indeed absolutely depend on the knowledge of a suffering Redeemer; and even when it is admitted that, before the crucifixion of Christ, men could be pardoned and saved through repentance and faith in the love of God, it may still be thought that whatever was accomplished by the appearance, life, and death of Christ might have been accomplished earlier, and so have inured to the benefit of a greater number of men.

The only Scriptural answer to the question is given in Gal. iv. 4, "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son" (less explicitly in Mark i. 15; Eph. i. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Tit. i. 3). This, it is true, only affirms generally that until the birth of Jesus, the time had not come for this complete self-manifestation of the Father; it does not explain why it had been postponed just so long. But, though no one can demonstrate that, from the nature of the case, it could not have taken place sooner, it is yet not difficult to see that there are good reasons why the Christian revelation could not so successfully have fulfilled its end, if it had been made in the early years of man's existence. Divine revelations can become the general possession of men only by the same

methods of communication as are used in the spread of other facts and beliefs. They must be imparted by tradition from one man or one generation to another. But in the beginnings of human history, when writing had not been invented, and when intercourse between the various tribes was inconstant and disturbed, any tradition was liable to become speedily corrupted. It was not until the world had reached such a political and linguistic state as existed in the reign of Augustus that conditions were favorable for the rapid and accurate communication of the good news of the Christian revelation throughout the inhabited earth. The "fulness of the time" had come.

But though the full and final manifestation of divine grace could not wisely have been made earlier than it was, God had not left the world without a witness of himself. He spoke then in his Son; but he had spoken of old time in the prophets (Heb. i. 1). He had spoken to the heathen world also through his Spirit and "the things that are made," so that they were "without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). The work of redemption through the historic Christ is not in such a sense the sole way of salvation that there is no hope for one who has not known about it. But this does not detract from the supreme worth of the gospel of redemption. The more clearly and impressively the forgiving love of God can be made

known, the greater is the number of those who are likely to be led by it to forsake ungodliness, and to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The preaching of Christ crucified must ever be the great power of God unto salvation; and those who have heard it are "debtors" to those that are without this revelation, to bring to their knowledge this story of the redeeming love of God.

The love of God! Many are the mysteries and difficulties brought before the mind whenever we try to sound the depths of theologic truth. But after all there is no greater mystery than that which is involved in just this simple doctrine of the divine love. To think that the Infinite Sovereign of the universe follows every one of the myriads of his creatures with a perfect knowledge and a keen sympathy—with a burning hatred of sin, combined with an intense love of the sinner—this is not easy. Even those who intellectually assent to the truth practically disbelieve it. Many find it difficult theoretically to believe in a God that is anything more than an unconscious Power. To think of him as a real person seems to them altogether too anthropomorphic. But even if they get over this difficulty, they find it hard to conceive of him as having his serenity disturbed by vexing emotions of grief, or as really having a paternal fondness and care for the millions of wretched and despicable specimens of humanity on whom they themselves scarcely bestow a

thought, or of whom they can think only with feelings of contempt or disgust. There are few in all this mass that any one of us cares to associate with. Can it be that the God of unsullied purity so loved all this world of degraded, besotted, selfish, vengeful creatures, that he gave his own Son to become a man of sorrows, and to die for them? Ah, the mystery of the Incarnation is small compared with the mystery of love which made the incarnation necessary. And even though one may think that he can believe in that love, it is a yet higher attainment to become able to say, with firm conviction, "The Son of God loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20). And greater still is the spiritual feat—and how many even of the best of us must say of it, "It is high, I cannot attain unto it"—to reach the point of being able to say, in the triumph of personal experience: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

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